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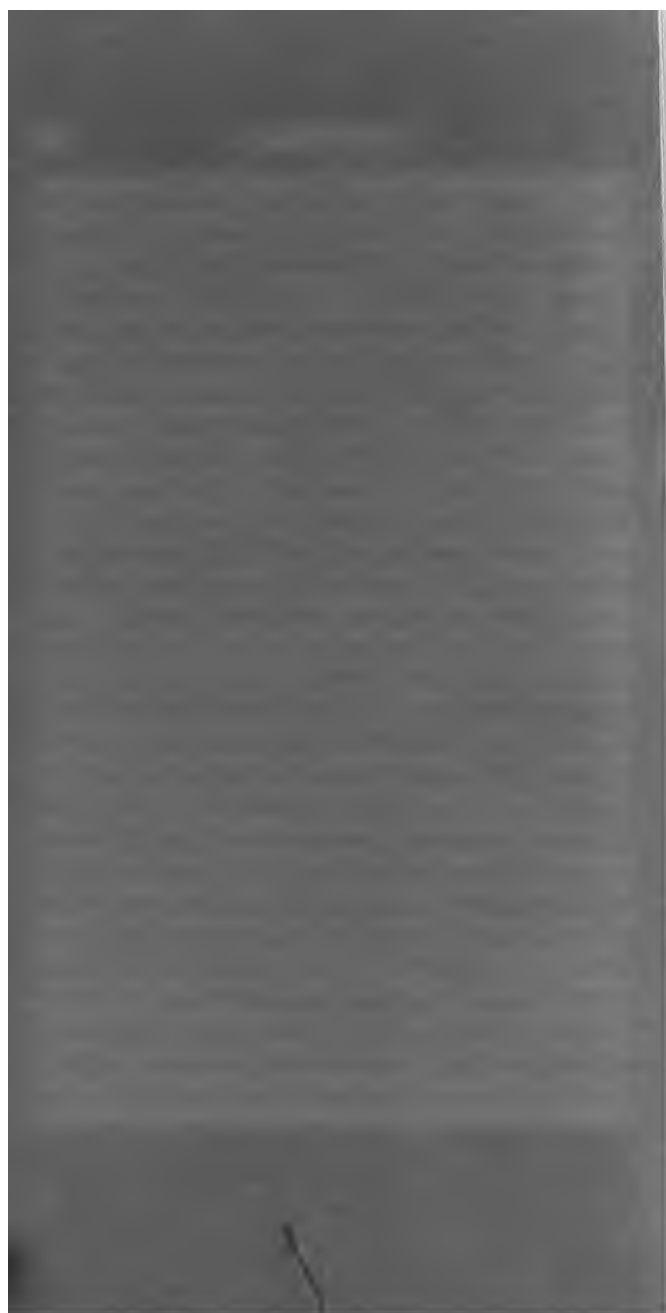
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St. Louis, Mo.

August 1, 1884

Dear Mr. [unclear]

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LATER YEARS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE OLD HOUSE BY THE RIVER", AND "THE OWL
CREEK LETTERS."

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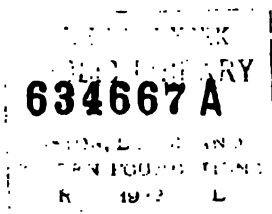
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Dedication.

WHEN this volume was prepared for press, it was dedicated to two friends, by the round table in whose pleasant home we had often found a welcome, and had known many hours of serene pleasure. Even while the book was in the printer's hands, and before this page, which is the last to be printed, was reached, the sunshine of that home departed, and a shadow fell there which the light of long life will never prevail to overcome. The dedication of the book must, therefore, be changed, for the same page can not well be addressed to one on earth, a man like myself, and to another in heaven, an angel of the angels. My living friend will grasp my outstretched hand, and thank me for the silence that does not attempt, in vain words of human utterance, to speak his grief and my affection.

Humbly and lovingly I dedicate the book to the

memory of his dead wife, not thinking thus to place a monument of any enduring nature above the place of her holy repose, but that a few, my friends, who read this book, may be alternately sad and rejoicing, even as we are, to know that there was one on earth of late, so gentle, so lovely, so beloved as she, who has gone to the company which is gathered of the beloved of all nations and all times, in "that beautiful country, that far away country, where is no night on land or sea."

W.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Old House by the River, May 1, 1854.

THE night has come down gloriously, and the stars are watching the river, and the river is babbling to the stars its old story of the rocks that so bewilder and trouble it, and the moon is sitting calmly in the sky, as if to judge between them, and I have been standing with my face against the little window, looking out, undetermined to which party I shall volunteer my services as counsel; and having at length concluded to let them plead their own causes, satisfied that the moon is a changeful judge, and that neither may hope for full justice from her, and that I am better out of the quarrel, I have taken my position with my feet toward the fire, and have now been dreaming away at least half an hour in reveries.

On the table lies a book, a curious mixture of printed matter and manuscript, which is none other than the volume now in the hands of the reader of this letter. Beside it lies "The Old House by the River;" and as that book was a history of years long gone, it has been determined that this shall be called "Later Years," as indicating its contents.

After the Old House was closed, years ago, and our

quiet life in the country was exchanged for the city, we—that is to say, Joe Willis and myself—sought such occasional relief as we might from the turmoil and weariness of city life in wanderings here and there, sometimes in the forest, sometimes on the sea, sometimes, as now, at the Old House, not unfrequently at the crowded resorts of the gay and pleasure-loving, and very often up and down the streets of the great metropolis. From time to time I wrote sketches of what we did, what we saw, and what we thought, and these sketches were printed in the columns of a commercial journal in the city. Some of them will be found in this volume.

For some years I have made those who read these letters the companions of many hours of pleasant conversation, and I have been bold to think that there were some who followed our wandering steps with at least a friendly interest. It is to such that I especially commend this volume, which, in some measure, contains the running history of our life during the later years, since we have entered the world, and left the Old House by the River.

Year after year, with never-failing delight, Willis and myself were together in the forest. Since that first spring morning, when we, two Highland boys, escaped from school, trudged with a gun between us up the slope of the mountain, and, sitting on the topmost peak, talked of the world, as we were but then beginning to know it, since that morning when we date our first hunt, we have had no word of difference, no thought of

unkindness. It was many years after that we discovered our cabin. The stillness and beauty of the scene won us. I will not deny that at that time I was in a humor to be won by any thing that was lonely and lovely. So we have made many pilgrimages thither since then, and have had pleasure, not to be told, in our companionship in the forest. That life over, we sought other pleasures and other amusements, and the years sped along. We are growing old, Joe, are we not? The past gleams radiantly on us from out those long, dark vistas of monumental buildings, and starry eyes seem as far off from us as the skies above us!

"*Hæc olim meminisse juvabit*," was our motto then, and are not those days a glorious memory?

I wish you could see the form of my old friend, as he stands before the fire at this instant, and replies to me. He, at least, will not forget.

In publishing these letters, I have no apologies to make for any thing I have said, nor any explanations to offer of any thing which may seem strange or out of place. I have given some of the experiences of our life, yet I need not say that they have been but the few, while the many were for our own hearts, or those hearts which beat close against our own. There are stories of those years that would fill volumes of the great history of man. There were experiences of my own, and of my friends, that surpass in their exquisite beauty, their touching mournfulness, all that romance can furnish or imagination paint.

There are voices coming up now to my ears, as I sit

before the fire, out of the graves of those years, whose holy tones are full of thrilling melody. There were hours which, as they passed, condensed in their few minutes more joys of almost heavenly purity than you would believe earth could contain in all its centuries. There were scenes that my pen dare not attempt to describe, and emotions that may be felt, but not told.

I have had but one rule in preparing these sketches. It has been to make my readers, as far as possible, my companions in the enjoyment of the beautiful wherever I find it, whether in nature, art, memories, or dreams. I have lived for it. I have worshiped nothing else. In leading them along the same path I walked, I have been obliged to show the river of my thoughts, but only its surface, broken by an occasional bubble from its unseen depths.

Believe me, the beautiful is not alone in the external world, in forests, or oceans, or stars, or maidenly loveliness of eyes, or lips of winsome wine. There are shades and shapes floating in the sunshine of fancy that are very fair to look on, and that will gladden you with their loveliness. I am no bigot to believe that *το αγαθον* is alone *το καλον*, nor am I an enthusiast to bow down and worship any one form of loveliness as the only work of God worthy of admiration. But to those who toil and strive in the world, I have tried to offer that source of beauty which I know is the surest in hopes of the future, and in memories of olden times. And now I challenge reproof. You, worn and weary man of the world, chained to your business as the Ro-

man criminal to a lifeless body, content to waste yourself on the beggarly gold you toil after, sneering in presence of the world at aught of affection or of memory—you dare not, whatever you may say now, you dare not shut yourself up with the holy memories that throng the gates of your soul, and forbid them entrance. You sneer now, but you wept last night. You mutter contempt now, but your agony was on you as you walked your lonesome chamber, and writhed in vain struggles with the emotions that mastered you. It is vain to talk to me of cold-hearted men. Men are hypocrites, enough of them, as I well know. But let me tell you, where you find a man most cold, most steeled against these gentle emotions, most fond of sneering at love and boyish phantasies, under that man's flimsy mask I can see a crushed agony! In his soul is a well of deep, untouched, unstirred, mighty (perhaps remorseful) memory. The springs are far down, and it is filling up, up, up, and ere long the heavy rock on the mouth of the well will be lifted, and the torrent burst forth!

God be with you, proud man, in the hour of your extremity!

There will come to every man an hour when these gentler sympathies of his nature will be all aroused. Beware, lest in that hour you seek an answering heart, and seek in vain. Win love while you may. You will need it yet.

But I am no preacher, and my pen is betraying me into a homily. I have somehow fancied, too egotisti-

cally, perhaps, that I might move one heart that has been closed against the beautiful things of earth to open its gates. If I have done thus much, I am content.

I am now in and of the world. No hermit, but mingling daily and hourly with those for whom I have written, and whose friendly regard I hope to retain. On the car, the steamer, in the crowded hotel, the street, the concert-room, in one or the other of the scenes of the great city, we may, unknowing and unknown, jostle against each other, or look each other in the face. If you love me, look kindly then on all you meet, lest you frown on me. Speak gently to all strangers, lest you some day sadden me by unkindness.

Some sunny morning you will read my name in your paper as among those who sleep at length after life's labor. Look with loving eyes, then, on all mourners for my sake, so that you send no new grief to those hearts (and that one heart of hearts) which love me well enough to mourn that I am not!

The fire on the hearth-stone is almost burned out. I have been watching the flickering shadows on the wall, and remembering the forms that were beautiful in this old house, in the days of old, that passed away as those shadows fled when the hearth-fire crumbled down. Then, as I watch more intently, I see the steady glow of the bright red coals, and the distinct, unchanging outline of the shadows cast by them. They do not flicker, nor dance, nor change, but are steadfast there. So I compare them to the clustering trusts of maturer years, and gaze and gaze as the hours pass on; and, though

I know they are but shadows, and will fade in time, yet I know too that I am but a shadow, the shadow of a shadow, and so I fall asleep, dreaming pleasant dreams of the day when there will be no more shadows at all.

W.



Contents.

	PAGE
I. THE MADONNA	17
II. SUNDAY MORNING	26
III. TROUT	33
IV. THE HURRICANE	41
V. LEGEND OF OWL CREEK	48
VI. "LET ME SLEEP"	57
VII. HOMEWARD	66
VIII. A PLEASANT DAY	71
IX. THE HUDSON	77
X. CAPE MAY	84
XI. AN OLD FRIEND	91
XII. THE CABIN	99
XIII. A SORE FOOT &	107
XIV. THE WILLAHANNA	115
XV. PIKE FISHING	121
XVI. ANNIE GRAY	128
XVII. A FAMILY HISTORY	137
XVIII. BLUE FISH	144
XIX. APRIL STORMS	153
XX. BLOCK ISLAND	163
XXI. A BLOCK ISLAND SUNDAY	169
XXII. THE SOUTHEAST BLUFFS	175
XXIII. ROAD COMPANIONS	184

	PAGE
XXIV. A SEPTEMBER MORNING	191
XXV. A SEPTEMBER DAY.....	198
XXVI. PIGEON SHOOTING	206
XXVII. ALONG THE ERIE RAIL-ROAD.....	214
XXVIII. THE HILL.....	220
XXIX. THE VALLEY OF THE DELAWARE	228
XXX. REST.....	236
XXXI. UP THE DELAWARE.....	244
XXXII. THE FOREST.....	250
XXXIII. A PANTHER.....	255
XXXIV. JOSHUA SMITH.....	261
XXXV. THE RED MEN.....	269
XXXVI. RAIL-ROAD ROMANCE.....	277
XXXVII. TROUT.....	286
XXXVIII. THE OLD PRECENTOR	299
XXXIX. HOME.....	307
XL. EGYPT IN NEW YORK.....	315
XLI. A REMINISCENCE OF WALL STREET.....	326
XLII. THE OLD HOUSE	335

LATER YEARS.



The Madonna.

New York, December, 18—.

IT is a cold evening. I have just come in from a call at the house of a friend, whose house is indeed to me almost like my own, for the families pass much of their time together. I did not find him at home. The rooms were empty, and I took a seat in the library to await his return; but I waited an hour in vain, and then gave it up and came home.

He has some choice paintings on the walls of the library, where there is room for them, some of which he has collected, and others have been painted for him; and the hour that I passed among them was not wholly without company.

He had a picture made from a scene in which he once joined Joe Willis and myself. It is an exquisite view of the Phantom, off Watch Hill, coming in at sunset. None of your stiff, pasteboard pictures of a vessel, but a spirited, lively sketch, by a master hand. The very patch in the mainsail is perfect, and Joe Willis's old hat shows above the weather rail precisely as if he were lying on deck in his usual free and easy style, while the stiff nor'wester is driving the spray clear

over her. You can see the little craft shake and quiver to that sea, and lift her head up bravely to it.

Directly opposite to that is one of Sir Peter Lely's inimitable portraits, an original of the second Charles ; at least so say his artist friends, who profess to know by internal evidence whether it is painted from a sitter or is a copy. It is a beautiful work, beyond question. Then there is a group of Cupids, full of life and frolic, and a small, dark, twilight picture of Paulemberg, which I study over sometimes by the hour, to try and recollect what I once thought good in it ; a landscape which might well be taken for a Salvator, if it be not one, and—but I do not intend a catalogue. I was but naming them, that you might know the phantoms which surrounded me in the fire-light.

But chief of all the paintings, I enjoy looking at one that I have not named. I have seldom seen a Madonna that I admired except as a work of art. Few faces of the Holy Mother in painting reach the heart of the gazer. They are usually the countenances of imagination. But Murillo's Madonna was always to my mind beautiful exceedingly, and this is one of Carlo Maratti's rare and exquisite copies. We sit hours and hours talking and looking at it ; and when I am by chance alone, as I was to-night, I sit watching the speaking features, the large, dark eyes, the matchless lips, and the rich, soft cheeks, that look as if some gipsy girl sat for the model, and the face flushes out and recedes, and appears and disappears in the flickering light, and the bright face of the babe on her knees gleams steadfastly

on me in all lights, so that I see in it the new-born hope of the world. You can not but love that mother and child. The gay, laughing face, and the beaming eyes of the Flora on the opposite wall, may win you a moment, but you turn back with frank emotion to the young mother, and yield homage to the world of woman feeling, woman love, that dwells in her gentle countenance.

Singularly enough, no one sees this painting without exclaiming at the likeness it bears to some friend, so that not less than a dozen different persons have been named who might have sat for the face. We attribute this to the fact that the artist has studied woman nature so as to make a picture that exhibits all its loveliness and gentleness, and each one who sees it recognizes the beloved expression of some gentle woman friend.

Thus much have I written of the paintings without intending it, for I designed to sketch two scenes in the history of two persons of which I was reminded by the fact that the Madonna is sometimes like one of them. I say sometimes, perhaps I should say always. Memory is variable. It is not always true nor always false; nor, when true, does it regularly restore the same faces, features, and characteristics of past times or lost friends. Thus, in this case, when the house is filled with gaiety, and the rooms are ringing to the sounds of music and laughter-loving voices, if, with some of the visitors, I turn into this quiet room, and pause before the soft dove eyes of the Madonna, they light up with a

glow of youth, and joy-loving youth too; and anon, I remember one who was as radiant as these in all the magnificence of young beauty, in all the queenly splendor of an admired, almost a worshipped woman. The picture is like, yet not like her, then. At other times, when, as to-night, I am alone, or when the few who claim that room as ours pre-eminently are there together, and the eyes of the Holy Virgin look lovingly on us, we see the angelic beauty that we remember of old, and then it is very like the presence of our friend.

I remember the radiant beauty of Alice Macdonald very many years ago, when I was a mere boy. She was the daughter of one of the wealthy men of the city, who had also a country residence near the old place of which I have spoken, and she passed the earlier part of her life entirely in the country. She had grown up to womanhood with a heart full of all the beautiful adornments of a good, true woman's heart, and it was not to be feared that contact with society would produce any of the chilling or searing effect that it has on so many for too many young hearts are frozen to ice by worklikeness, or seared to callousness by burning experience in the contacts of this great city.

Years have passed now, and the story of her youth may be told, though in her lifetime it was unknown.

Frederick Winter was the son of the pastor of the church. Mr. Winter was not wealthy, but educated his children, and they were noble men. Fred was his great favorite, and deservedly so. Where he met Miss Macdonald I do not know, but I take it that

grown up together from childhood. No one, however, suspected them of any attachment, and, though often together, they displayed no special affection for each other. But love thrives in secret, and they did love.

I must pass on to the two scenes I intended to sketch. I did not and do not intend any history of this affection or of these persons. It is my design only to sketch a country and a city scene.

Frederick Winter was not well when he returned from college after graduating, and after a few weeks of struggling he gave up entirely, and lay down in his father's house to die. It was a terrible blow to the old man and to the family, but far more terrible to Alice, who was alone in her agony. She could not approach him, nor hear from him directly, for no one knew of her love, not even Frederick himself, though he had wooed her for years with earnest devotion.

And at length the end came. It was a soft November morning. The sun shone pleasantly down through the leafless branches of the trees in front of the pastor's house. There was a quail whistling in the field near by, and the sick boy smiled as the sharp, clear note of the bird came in at the window, which was slightly open to let in the soft air. The old gate creaked on its hinges as the hired man opened it to drive the cow into the street, and down to the pasture, and creaked again as it swung back, and the wooden latch rattled into its place. There was a blue-jay in the wood near the house, and his shrill scream rang in the still air with painful dis-

tinotness ; and a passing flight of crows went over the forest with monotonous voices.

All these sounds came into the room with musical clearness. Musical, for they were the familiar sounds now heard for the last time, unless in the resurrection we may return to our old homes.

In the room was deep silence. It was a large old room, with low ceiling and uneven floor. The bed stood in the corner. The chairs were plain wooden-seated chairs, with arms of hickory, or some other flexible wood. There was a rag carpet on the floor, covering only part of it ; the remainder was bare, but white and clean. The windows were filled with small, old-fashioned panes of glass, and the sunshine stole pleasantly in, and fell on the floor with a soft radiance that seemed to speak of Heaven.

The light of life was going out of the eyes of the sick boy. I call him boy, for his father and mother could not yet think him other than their cherished little one. The world was vanishing ; the last words were spoken long ago. Speech had departed, but consciousness and love remained. Visions of the fading present flitted around him, and the radiant features of his boy-love began to assume the angelic beauty of the new country into which he was passing. Slowly, slowly, from the fair country side, from the old parsonage, from the low room, from the dear arms of his beloved mother, from the creaking gate, and screaming jay, and whistling quail, he passed away into the dark and silent unknown.

Alice Macdonald sat in the room where she had often

received Frederick Winter. It was the library of her father's country residence, and its window opened toward the village. She had not slept that night, and she wrapped herself in the folds of a magnificent shawl as she sat there, for though the air was warm like summer, she was shivering. The window was open. She would have it so, and she looked toward the spire of the church, and saw the clock hands pointing to half past ten, when the stroke of the bell fell on her ears. She trembled like a leaf, and sprang to the window, holding the sill in her grasp with fingers that clung like the fingers of a drowning person to a wreck while she counted ten strokes, and a pause. Oh, that it would not strike again! It does not. The interval is long—longer; a hope has time to spring, to grow, to blossom in that instant, and to die as the bell resumes its heavy story, and then each stroke destroys a hope that has risen since the last. Would that the bell might cease! Seventeen, eighteen, it goes on with terrible, with deadly voice. Nineteen, twenty, and it pauses but an instant, and adds one. She was pale and white as if dead, and, burying her face in the folds of her shawl, she sank feebly on her knees before the window, where she remained motionless for nearly an hour. After that she arose, and her face and her heart were alike calm.

Many years have passed since that morning. I will not number them. Miss Macdonald returned to the city with her father in the course of the next winter. She did not go much into society; but when she did, she was admired and loved. But she did not marry. She

grew to be an old maid, but she never lost her **bel**
 I will not pause here, as I might, to say a word **for**
 maids. I never see one without remembering **Alit**

It was a winter evening. The sun had left **a**
 world. The sound of passing feet on the pavement
 sharp, and the tread of the thousands hastening ho
 ward rang with distinctness in the room of the dy
 old maid. It was a richly-furnished room, in a li
 house on a stately avenue. Heavy curtains of sa
 lined damask were on the windows; the carpets w
 velvet; the furniture crimson and rosewood. All was **the**
 plain, but rich and costly. The stand near the bed was
 worth ten times all the furniture in the old parsonage,
 and the heavy plate that was on it would have pur
 chased the parsonage and grounds. A soft light was
 in the room from a lamp standing in a marble vase,
 through which it shed a dim glow, but just sufficient to
 enable persons to move to and fro.

The heavy roar of passing stages shook the house
 constantly. Somewhere, not many blocks distant, a
 factory, that had discharged its workmen at six o'clock,
 was now discharging its principal laborer, steam, and
 the shrill sound of the escape pipe united with the noise
 of the street to disturb the dying woman.

But as the night passed on, the sounds had less effect
 on her ears as they grew more dull to earthly sensa
 tions, and the voices of the other world began to fill
 them. At midnight she died. The good, true heart
 found warmth in death—such warmth as it had never
 known since the sad morning in the country so long

ago. The welcomes of that other world who can describe! The coming in, on its glad scenes, of dear old faces long loved, long waited for, to bless the very blessings of Heaven!

She died; and as she folded her hands across her breast, and looked toward Heaven, and saw the glory, and entered into it, and as the peace of death fell calmly, triumphantly on her white brow, the roar of passing carriages grew louder, and a ringing laugh of drunken revelers came up into the room from the pavement, and the bell of the neighboring church tolled twelve, and paused, and all went on as before. The great city, ceaseless in its succession of work and pain, and revel and agony, ceased not one moment because one heart less beat in its midst. There were many other hearts that ceased to beat about that time, and for no one of them all did the passing bell sound. But the morning dawned with cold gray light, and the streets were thronged again, and all was as before. But I do not think all was the same up yonder where they met, for I think—I trust—I believe—that the old maid was young, and fair, and radiant again, and that the boy's dying vision of angel eyes was at length a glad reality.

B

II.

Sunday Morning.

New York, February, 18—.

NO day in the city affords so great a contrast to the country as Sunday, and this not alone in the thousand gay people who throng the streets, nor in the noisy riot and confusion that make a Sunday evening more hideous than any other, both of which scenes are so unlike the calm solemnity of the country folk, but still more in the forms and appearances of devotion, the manners and styles of worship. Few who have been brought up in the city have any idea of the holiness of a country Sabbath; none who were born and bred in the country will ever forget it. For the right heart, indeed, the day is the same every where; and the forest sanctuary, with its hemlock spire and leafy arches, is a temple for no more nor less fervent praise than the massive stone nave and dark chancel of the cathedral. But no man could pass a Sunday in a certain country place that I could name, and not find himself a better, or, at least, a calmer man in the evening than he was at morning; and at this day it is something to be calm—to be, for a little, more quiet and peaceful.

There are hours when the memory of those calm

Sunday mornings comes over the soul with a tenderness no words can describe, and over the eyes with a blinding mist that shuts out all the present. There was a something in the very atmosphere unlike other days. They were glorious mornings, when the air was as calm as we sometimes fancy must be the air of the better country, and the sunshine pure, clear, and radiant on the snow. The bell of the old church would sound with an uncommon richness and purity of tone on such mornings, and the tinkle of sleigh-bells had not half the merriment, but had ten times the music of other days.

I remember a morning like this "in the long gone years;" not such as I have described, but such a one as this on which I am now writing. It was very cold. The sky was covered with flying clouds—misty, thin, cold clouds, that drifted furiously on the wind. Only now and then did the sun shine on the front of the old church; and when it did, it seemed only to make every thing appear colder, so little of cheer was there in the beams.

The sleighs of the church-goers came up one by one to the open space which had been cleared in the snow, and, dismounting here, they hastened into the warm air of the church; for in those days a stove had been introduced, though it was unusual, and had met some opposition from the old people.

Joe and myself had reached the door, and turned around for a moment to gather the folds of our cloaks, which the fierce wind had much disarranged, for we

always made a point of entering the church decorously and with dignity. As we turned, we saw two persons dismounting, who are the subjects of this sketch.

I propose to write of them simply because their faces came across my vision this morning with startling distinctness. It was at the church door in the city that I saw them, as I turned from the paved sidewalk into the iron gate. The wind was so furious that I closed my eyes, and buried my face in my cloak, and pushed hastily into the porch. "Surely," thought I, "it could not be that I saw any one then. Who was it? What vision flashed before me?" I looked back, but no one was there to whom I could attribute that dream—for dream it must have been. But when I was seated, and caught in the voluntary, which a skillful hand was playing, a strain of familiar music, then the faces I had seen came back with all the distinctness of reality, and I remembered the Sabbath morning of which I am now writing.

As we turned, we paused; for who could look at such a scene without pausing. Even on the threshold of the holy place, with minds and hearts directed toward the worship of God, we paused to do homage to his beautiful work, and waited to look at the exquisite loveliness of a woman. William Douglas was a poor old man. But in his poverty and feeble old age, he was more fit to be a king than any man that ever reigned. He was of tall and commanding stature, and his countenance was regal. He had not lived for seventy years in vain. But he had grown with the years

of his toil—grown in mental stature and strength ; and now that he was ready to depart, you looked at him as one who had been preparing to assume a throne, and you knew, when you saw him, that he was but a fool who believed that such a man could ever die.

And now he stood before the church door, in the bleak wind, on which his white hair streamed as he lifted his hat reverently from his head, as was his custom, and paused a moment to pray before he entered the house of his God.

The air was filled with driving, drifting snow, that mingled with his hair, and dashed across his withered cheeks. But he cared nothing for the snow. His thoughts were on a country where there is no storm, no wind but the soft breath of love. He looked up, not at the spire of the church, not at the drifting clouds above the spire, not at the blue breaks and the fathomless sky beyond the clouds, but up, up into the infinite mysteries of God's love, and into the abode of his servants, and his lips moved in words that were inaudible here, but that filled the courts of that great country with their simple and sublime earnestness.

All this time, and it was but a moment, Ellen Douglas, his grandchild, stood peacefully by his side, and the same wind and snow were dallying with the masses of her brown hair, or, rather, were striving to do so, but were kept mostly away by the close hood that she wore for lack of more showy head gear. She was a tall and slender girl, whose beauty was beyond praise. The old man, skilled in learning, had devoted the last

ten years of his life to her education, and though she could neither dance, draw, nor paint, she could translate a strophe of Sophocles, and some even went so far as to assert that she could read the books of Moses in the original tongue.

Their cottage was a curious place. The old man's means were very slender, yet he had contrived to live comfortably in this cottage, and to bring up his orphan grand-daughter on the income of a small property left her by her father.

She was no blue. She would not have known what the word meant. Greek and Latin were to her like the spelling and arithmetic of other children. Day after day, week after week, year after year, she had lived alone in the little cottage with the old man and his store of books; and her sole employment and enjoyment had been to join him in all his studies, to assist him in all his fancies, and to learn from him every thing that his well-stored mind could furnish for her grasp. When for a little she mingled with others, she was like all young maidens of her age, gentle, retiring, and somewhat shy, only there was a look of maturity in her deep and beautiful eye that attracted you toward her, and then the exquisite simplicity of her character won your heart.

For a moment, I have said, she stood quietly by the old man's side, and it may be that she joined in his simple act of worship, as she bowed her head. As he replaced his hat and advanced toward the porch, she raised her head, and the wind, with a sudden sweep of

fun or fury, burst the strings of her hood, and carried it out among the grave-stones, the tops of which but just stood out of the snow. And then, as she raised her hands involuntarily, with a slight exclamation of surprise, the magnificent masses of her hair streamed out in waves of light, and at the same instant she let go the folds of her long blue cloth cloak, and that, too, was thrown back, hanging only by the clasp at her throat, revealing the symmetry of her form, clad in a woollen dress, tight at the throat and waist, elsewhere loose and graceful, though severely simple.

Was it not a scene for memory? A thousand times, in later years, I have recalled that scene. How beautiful she was, as the flush of surprise and modest confusion lit up her radiant face! And there she stood, irresolute, not knowing for the moment what to do, and her glorious hair flowed like a torrent on the wind, and her cloak streamed back, and her eyes flashed, and then half filled with tears, and the wind and the snow played with her warm red cheek.

Have I not said that this was in the long gone years? Why should I go on with more? Let me leave her standing there, young and radiant in her loveliness as a statue. Let me leave her there for you to see her as I have seen her ever since, the incarnation of youth and purity.

But it may not be. And yet they left her there who loved her best—just there!

The snow was gone. The first spring violets, blooming not six feet from that path, were disturbed to make

her grave. I am not going to tell you more of her. It was not my intention to speak of any scene but that in the church-yard. When the May mornings came, the old man came alone to the church, and paused, as before, each Sunday morning, half way from the gate to the door, and prayed ; and sometimes I could see the struggle in his soul, as he hardly knew whether to look down at the newly-made grave close by his feet, where lay hidden all he had loved on earth, or as of old up to the God that had given and taken her. But then I could see the victory too, for the victory was always the same, and he would raise his now bent body up to its full stature, and slowly, and as if with difficulty, would lift his eyes from the grave up the church side, up the tall spire, up to the fleeting clouds and changeful sky, and then I could see that he looked on, on, into the fathomless beauty of the abyss above, deeper than ever before into the infinite glory of God's love ; and that, as he prayed, he heard a voice inaudible to our ears, but clear, and pure, and ravishing to his keener hearing—a voice that seemed to him to surpass the songs of all the other inhabitants of that long-looked-for home !

III.

C r u i t.

Owl Creek Cabin, May, 18—.

WITH greater pleasure than I can well describe, I date again from the scene of so many pleasant days and months in past times, of a few of which you have heard, but more of which are treasured memories between Willis and myself. I had much feared my inability to escape, for a single day this spring, from the duties of a life that is closely involving me now in the meshes of business, and I had written condolatory letters to J——, and to the doctor, and to Joe, on the position in which each of us seemed to be placed. But, seeing daylight dimly through the cloud of engagements before me, I suddenly determined to write to Joe, who is now at his place in ——, and if he said yes to my letter, I thought I might leave for a few days, and return fitter for labor. I wrote to him. His reply was characteristic. I can not forbear giving the conclusion of it:

“So you see, my dear Philip, how impossible it is. Were it for only this one cause, I am bound here; but I fear much that I shall not escape. I have made up my mind to forego all our old pleasures, and to give up

any hope of ever again sunning myself of a May morning on the rock by the cabin. Our hunting days are over. We are all growing to be worldlings, and our hearts are learning at this late day (when we might have thought them proof against coldness) to beat by rule. We shall not hunt together much more. Yet, Philip, '*hæc olim meminisse juvabit*,' and some quiet day, when we are very old (older than now, friend of my heart), we will take our rusted rifles and one of Nora's descendants, and walk out to the bank where the ruins of our cabin will be lying, and, throwing ourselves on the rock, will lave our feet again in the stream, and, falling asleep in the sunshine, dream of the past and all its memories!

"But be not saddened at the change! Life is but a series of changes, each loss being made up by a gain. If we may not worship again together in our forest temple, nor join our voices of a Sunday evening in praise with the thunder of the sea, there is no sanctuary so sacred as a loving heart, and no melody of praise so pure as the voices of the loved joining in joyous songs. If we may not be lulled to sleep by the moan of the pine-trees, or the ripple of the musical waves far out at sea, we shall sleep as pleasantly, as deeply, as sweetly, if the soul, with cheerful, earnest thoughts, will but sing itself to slumber.

"We shall sleep soon, sleep solemnly, nor voice of love nor voice of tempest wake us. I remember, that night, years ago, when we breasted the waves a hundred miles at sea, that I then thought our struggle was

like life. Side by side we swam, and side by side we now swim in the sea of life. The shore is far away as then. I remember that you raised your head, and asked me if I could not hear the surf roar on the beach. Lift your head now, and you will hear the thunder of the waves, as one by one they break on the shore of eternity. Do you not hear that deep-toned voice from the gloom before us? But we will not falter now, and the wave that dashes us on the beach will be a blue one, breaking on a golden shore, whose murmur in our weary ears will be a lullaby to long and longed-for rest. Throw your arm around my neck, old friend, and let us swim on! Forgive my refusal. Could you see me, I would not speak a word, but point you to my desk, and let my 'chains' plead for me. 'I can't get out,' as Sterne's starling said. We'll be at Saratoga in August for a little while. That's understood, is it not? Please say to —, &c., &c. [private matters].

"Truthfully alway,

J. W.

"P.S.—I'll go. Lend me your hazel rod—the one with the heavy butt. Mine is out of order.

"J. W."

And he is here. The trout seem to know him, and take his hook far more willingly than they take mine. He has, until to-day, taken by far the largest fish and the largest quantity. Where he is at this moment I can not imagine. He went out an hour before sunset, saying he would return to supper within thirty minutes, and has not been seen since. Nora is with him.

The music which fills my ears is such as I have not heard in months before. The wind, breathing through the tree-tops, joins with the murmur of the river in a low, deep tone of perfect harmony. Centuries have taught them to accord well. I raise my eyes, and meet the familiar gleam of a star through the little window, joining with the water and the wind to tempt me out. But I will not be tempted. Yet I can sit here and gaze and listen. I am aware that my habit of star-gazing is called by all manner of ill-natured names, and that I am ridiculed for my love of these bright companions. But what care I? I can enjoy what you, who ridicule star-gazers, can not. I have a love for looking at the stars. I believe that God made them to be looked at, gazed at, night after night, year after year, age after age, in their solemn immutability. And so I gaze and gaze, until my soul is away among them freer than the winds of earth, freer than the glance of mortal eye. What a page of truths God has made the sky! What a volume of lessons! Shall I read you one from the book? Let me find a text. Ah, here is one.

“To love a bright particular star and think to wed it.” What a glorious love that is which makes its object appear a thing of heaven. Unattainable at the first, but as its holy kisses fall on the lover’s forehead, as its matchless beauty melts into his soul, as its wild caresses are flung on him, and its embraces are close around him, he forgets that he adores a star, and “thinks to wed it.” And as he reaches out his arms

to take and give again the long embrace, as he strives to strain his idol to his heart, lo! it is gone! passed into the serene blue deep, lost in the illimitable sky! Vainly he watches for its coming, vainly calls on his lost one. So at length a night comes on, and when it has gathered gloom, the star, the holy star, is there again! But he reaches out no arms for embraces now. He sees his idol, he feels those kisses falling as holily on his brow; but the star-beams are tears—scalding tears! And he knows now, with aching eyes and dew-wet forehead, that his angel love is but a phantom, or at best a memory. And whenever a night of desolation comes, the star is there! The darker the night, the holier the gleam!

There, you have a sermon. Apply it to any earthly hope, and see how it fits. The moral, then, is to place not too much dependence even on stars.

But you are asking what I am here for. I forgot to intimate that I came to take trout. As to success thus far, it has been moderate, and the sport is scarcely as good as usual. I have seen a very few large fish this year. I took a good one this morning, which made up for previous failures.

It is quite too early for flies, and we have angled with bait altogether until to-day. This morning, having taken out and put back half a dozen fish, averaging less than half a pound each, I at length reached a basin from which I have landed some noble fellows. I determined, considering the brilliancy of the morning and the softness of the air, to try a dull gray fly, which

looks like nothing that ever had life, but which is taking to a trout's eye. Preparing my line for a very long cast, and approaching the basin near its upper end, I took my position against a rock, and lifted my line, allowing the wind to carry it over the water. At the point where the stream falls over the rock into the basin, the water is, perhaps, six feet or more in depth, and the bottom is solid rock. The bank, however, on the side opposite to me, was a mass of moss and fern overhanging the clear stream, and now shading it from the sun. The basin was some forty feet wide, and I allowed my fly to fall to the surface close to the bank, and not far from the fall. It barely touched the ripple, and a slight cast threw it a few inches up stream from the top of a ripple to the top of the next, and I was lifting it again, when the water parted over the back of a beautiful fellow, who lazily lifted himself out, and fell back just touching the bend of the hook with his nose. It was enough, however. He had smelled the small piece of worm that was on the hook under the fly's wings, and I only feared, from his fatness and laziness, that the exertion of that leap might have disinclined him to try it again.

I threw again, however, and succeeded in giving the tremulous, hesitating motion to my fly as it approached the water, which is both desirable and difficult, and as it touched the surface, a rush showed me two trout's heads, but of course only one succeeded in hooking himself. It was doubtless the same one, for my reel flew around at a swift rate, and my rod bent quite too much to please me.

The trout went down stream, carrying fifteen fathoms of line with him. I could spare only twenty-five, and therefore started after him, over rocks, fallen trees, across the bed of a small stream, and through a marshy place some rods wide, at full pace. He behaved oddly, crossing from one side of the stream to the other, diving under a bank, or a rock, or a stump, down a rapid, and straight through another basin, until I came to a spot where my progress was barred. A high rock rose from the water's edge, effectually stopping me. I looked at it, at the water which ran by like a mill-race over a hard, gravel bottom, at the sky, at my rod, at my reel that was spinning around swiftly, and had not five fathoms left on it. I had but an instant to look and think. The next I was in the middle of the stream, following the end of my pole.

At this instant the reel stopped. The trout had turned, and was coming up again. I had but time to see that Joe was on the bank some forty yards below, and had probably turned him, when I began to wind in as he came up. I stood still, and he shot by me, and I followed him back to the starting-place.

Here I let him lie till Joe answered my call and came up. Placing him with a pole to beat the stream below the basin, I teased the poor fellow from the bank. He dashed at the outlet, but was scared back by Joe's noise, and after a circuit two or three times around the basin, he dove again into his favorite hole, nor could I tease him out for five minutes.

Meantime we held a council, to devise ways and

means to save my line and the trout. Determining, however, that no other than the ordinary course could be pursued, I finally got him out, and he now darted down stream, but, wheeling suddenly, took refuge under the bank in a very shallow spot. Handing Joe my rod, I lay down on the bank, and, putting my hand under it, felt for him, and at length found him. You may always take trout in this way. He did not move as I passed my hand along under him, but dropped into it, and, gradually approaching his head, I locked my thumb and finger in his gills and lifted him out.

IV.

The Burial.

Owl Creek Cabin, May, 18—.

I SOMETIMES fear that you tire of my letters from the woods ; and on reflecting what they have been, I am compelled to acknowledge that there appears to be very little variety in them, however much there may be in the life that we lead here. I can not make my pen paint this variety. It consists in trivial matters. The catching of a larger fish than ordinarily, the meeting with some stranger in the forest, either a wandering citizen like myself, or a woodsman who has strayed from his accustomed places, or perhaps a passing wind on the mountain side, or the shadow of a cloud sweeping mysteriously over the hills, or a bright and beautiful mantle spread across the sky through which the sunlight struggles and bursts triumphantly, or a new note in the brook's voice, or the renewal of an old familiar tone in the wind, or letters from home, birds, flowers, stories, or books—all these, and countless other things, make up the changing scenery and employments of each day. We live from hour to hour, happily, carelessly, freely. You can have little idea of the sense of freedom of which I speak until you have felt it. There is only one place where it is stronger, and that is on the

ocean. I stood the other day on the hill northwest of Stonington, on the old Post-road to New London, and looked at the sea, sleeping in the sunshine before me. Coming suddenly on the scene as I did, I stopped and drew a long, luxurious breath, and looked around me. That long breath is the involuntary effort of the lungs when one stands above all the world, and the air seems fresh, and full, and boundless. It is an effort to take as much as they can of the rich supply. They are like the wine-lover when the cask is broached. He drinks to intoxication because there is so much to be drunk. Thank God, there is no intoxication in breathing his air. Do you remember that the Latins used the same word to express *air* that they used to express *heaven*? I am not about to discuss the locality of heaven, but leave you to imagine what it is in that synonym which has always pleased me. I was on the brow of that hill. I was there bodily, but away from it, floating on that golden atmosphere, bathing in the mellow sunshine of the spring, moving unrestrained, unclogged, through the space which now seemed boundless as its Maker; forgetting utterly that I was man and mortal, running instead the race of life, and that is a race in which all carry weight.

I was soon after in the city again, surrounded by walls of brick and stone. I could not breathe freely. There was an oppression on my breast—a heavy hand that I could not rid myself of; and albeit in the former instance I had an equally heavy pressure of business and of care on my mind, yet the simple fact that

nothing bounded my vision, nothing limited my thoughts, instantly seemed to lift from me the oppression, which became tenfold more intolerable when I reached the city the next morning. Therefore am I here ; and, so long as I remain, I shall not allow any circumstance to weigh on me, but shall, as at this moment, give free rein to thought, and be perfectly and wholly at ease.

Joe has been some time engaged in rigging an extemporaneous hammock, but as his best materials are bearskins and buckskin thongs, he doesn't seem to succeed. I have suggested the idea of making it a sort of stationary affair, fastening each corner of a large bearskin to a sapling, and he is trying that fashion. After he finishes it, I shall claim the patent right, and appropriate it to my own uses.

We had a hurricane yesterday, which left the mountain side marked with the forest ruins. There is a path mowed across the whole range. It came on at about noon. A dense black cloud lay on the horizon, and came slowly up until it reached the zenith. At the instant that the black thunder had veiled the sun, I saw the trees on the opposite mountain ridge swaying and bowing before the blast. It was perfectly still and calm where we were, and not a breath moved the delicate flower of the mysotis, which bloomed at my feet, as I stood on the river bank. A moan came from the storm, and I bowed my head and listened to it. At first it was but a low wail, followed by a whisper, as if a mother had heard her waking child's cry and was stilling it. I knew well that voice. It was premoni-

tory of coming destruction. Not like that indescribably melodious sound of the wind on the ocean, but more broken—fierce, yet sweet; for the wind on the ocean is married to the sea, and deals with it as with a bride. Its sounds are always full of music until it meets some intruder, and then, with a shriek and cry of madness, it bears away the stranger. But on land the wind seems hurrying to its bride, and angry at every obstruction. So now. The trees swung to and fro on the ridge, and waved and tossed their arms in confused fright, until at length they were suddenly released from their terror and stood still. But the ensuing silence was fearful. I saw a commotion in the centre of the black cloud; I heard a roar, indistinct at first, then loud as thunder; and on the top of the ridge, almost on the highest peak, I suddenly saw a giant oak go down, and a pathway was opened, and a hundred trees lay by it as the storm came down the hill. I was chained to my place. I could not move, but gazed. They were swept away like straws, those noble trees; some writhed for an instant, and tossed their branches high up, and turned quite around, as if to face the tempest, and then fell crashing. Others lifted no hand, but bowed their old heads, on which the Spring was but just shedding its blessings, and, Cæsar-like, seemed to fold their mantles around them as they fell. Some of them, I thought, looked at the wind with mournful look before they fell, a sort of “*et tu Brute*” look, for they had fancied that the centuries had made the wind their friend. You see how quickly I had personified them. I had no thought of

danger myself, but pitied the forest. In fact, the track of the hurricane was across the hill-side, and not toward me, so that I was perfectly safe until the usual general tempest which follows a hurricane should reach me. When that came, as it did at length, I was thoroughly drenched before I could reach the cabin, and I thought for half an hour that the logs would not hold together; but they stood it bravely, and the sun shone out clearly at two o'clock on a green and lovely scene. Only that track of the wild wind was desolate. The fine old trees lay in confused masses, leaving a broad pathway open for the next storm that may come that way. This morning we crossed the river and went up to look at the ruins. They presented a sad scene. The forest is full of such scenes. In many places we come across piles of fallen trees, all lying in the same direction, in a narrow line extending for miles, heaped on one another, and all giving unquestionable evidence that they met their fate together. I have never seen a more thorough work of destruction than this of yesterday has been.

I went down to the clearing at the bridge last week, and found that a woodman had died of fever the day before, and they were to bury him that day. It was a scene worth remembering. No clergyman's voice was heard—there was none to pray. My friend, Colonel —, was absent, and the companions of the dead man followed him home. One of them, a rough-visaged but noble fellow, read from a Bible, to which book he seemed somewhat a stranger; and by some curious



fortuity (I could not believe that he selected it), he read the Psalm which commences, "The heavens declare the glory of God." It was full of solemn instruction to the hardy men who gathered around the open grave.

I lingered, as is my custom, after the few had gone. The grave was filled. The river murmured at the foot of the hill on which the hunter slept; the wind rustled among the leaves that lay by the mound; the sunlight fell peacefully on it, and the starlight will fall as holily. I compared the burial with one in the city. I remembered the vault, the silver-studded coffin handed down the steps, and laid on the tablet, that the dead may rest with its kindred; I remembered the closing of the iron door, the parting of the assembly, and the solemn loneliness of the full burial place, and I determined that the former was the calmer scene. I don't like the city vaults. I have a strange dislike to that attempt to separate the dust from its companion and equal clay. I stood, a few weeks since, at the Post-office in Nassau Street, and looked vacantly, not thinking what I was about, at one of the vault-stones in the yard. I was wondering who slept under it, while the busy thousands trod above. Manhood, wit, strength, virtue—all that was noble, all that was excellent, all that was God-like; beauty, matchless and pure—the gift of heaven to light some earthly home a while, and, passing away into the distance, win its lover, by its ever-increasing loveliness, to follow it heavenward. Joys are buried there! and there are buried agonies under the gray vault-stone. Open the grave with me. Let us go down the damp steps. Open the door. Here sleep, in silent, fearful

sleep, these dead companions. This little room has held them many a year together, yet they have exchanged no word, no smile, no token of affection or of recognition. It is terrible, this making companions of the dead! Read this plate. It is dim: wipe it off. The blackness of corrosion rests now only in the lines, and you can read it clearly. The sleeper was young, as living men count years, and died in the flush of manhood. I wonder who loved him? What tears sanctified this coffin ere it was brought here? Strike on the lid. He hears not, moves not, wakes not; he sleeps profoundly. Call him. Nay, start not so! It was but the ring of your voice you heard. The dead answer not in hollow tones like that. If they speak at all, it is in the clear, silvery tones which memory makes musical. Throw back the lid. Sexton, hold nearer your lamp! Dust! dust! And is this all? Has the high heart no record but this ashes? Has the strong arm not left at least one sinew? Oh, ye weary workers in the mines of life, who never come to the surface to see God's sunshine! oh, ye worn travelers in the journey, who, in your haste, will pause at none of the inns your guide so recommends! oh, ye stout men, who fight ever, finding or making somewhat to battle against unceasingly, before you rest here, a gleam of sunlight will fall on you, and you shall mourn that you never knew its holiness before! Laugh at me, if you will. Toil on, delve on, and die—die wearily, die alone, die to be buried, epitaphed, and forgotten. I will sun me a while here, and the same smile of God shall bless the turf that at length shall cover me.

V.

Legend of Owl Creek.

Owl Creek Cabin, May, 18—.

IT is a still and glorious evening. The last sun's rays lingered lovingly among the branches of the old oak tree, and their kisses were very pleasant, even pleasanter than usual, on our foreheads, as we stood bare-headed on the river bank and watched their reluctant fading. The twilight came down in mournful beauty, and one by one the watchers took their places above us. The wind, which had been somewhat boisterous, quite too much so for fishing, lulled into a perfect calm, and the mountains and the forest seemed to repose serenely in the still air. Only the river, brawling aloud, disturbed the calm and quiet scene ; but as the night grew darker, the softness which night always brings to sounds of water mellowed its voice, and I caught myself sleeping on the broad, flat rock, which is my favorite seat. In truth, I have been all day enjoying the "*dolce far niente*," and can assure you that it is verily a sweet pleasure to one wearied with long labor. It is well, at times, to let the thoughts have holiday. They run riot like boys let out of school, gathering flowers in sunny fields, or nuts from old trees, or lingering on the banks of brooks, or babbling music to the an-



swering ripples of the lake. Fairy fancies wile and win them. Butterflies or gilded moths attract them to wearisome chases over hills and through valleys, and escape them at the last. Then they kneel on the margin of some pure, cool spring, and drink rich draughts of refreshment, and leisurely and lazily stroll homeward, happily content. So, nestling at length in their best-loved resting-places, the pleasant night winds blow over them, and they sleep. How very like our thoughts are to schoolboys! I never thought of it before. Happy he whose truant fancies have one home, one voice of love to sing them to sweet slumber!

I have been idle to-day, because the wind has been too high for comfortable fishing. I did take one good fish for dinner out of a deep basin, well protected by hills. It was a tolerably well-fed trout, who rose at the first cast. Within a few days I have used nothing but the fly. In early and cold weather, I can take three trout with proper bait to one with a fly. I know that an idea is quite prevalent that trout leap as well in April as in August, but there is a serious error in the idea, as my experience has taught me. They will jump in March at some flies, but the fish thus taken are generally lean, hungry fellows, while the fat, well-fed ones lie quietly, taking whatever the Spring rains wash into the creeks. Trout-fishing, I may as well remark here, is not the extremely skillful and difficult work which it is represented to be by many self-glorifiers. A host of witnesses rise against them in the shape of bare-legged mountain boys, with crooked poles, hempen lines, and

angle worms, who land noble fish by the dozen pounds, while the weary citizen, with London rod and silk tackle, throws his fly without provoking a leap. I took a dozen trout out of a stream a few miles from Stonington the other day, and three of them I took with the same identical bait. I did not change it simply because it was the last worm in my box, and I was too tired to dig for more. A gentleman, whom I heard discoursing largely on trout-fishing a few weeks ago in New York, declared that no trout would touch a broken bait. He never tried them. They are, on the whole, a very stupid fish, rushing headlong at any thing eatable which shows itself. But if a man shows himself, they instantly become suspicious, and, when wide awake, are extremely careful and difficult to deceive. There is great skill in fly-fishing. It is *the* great angling. But the mountain-boy aforesaid will, after all, beat the fly-fisher generally by one half or three fourths. I beg you, therefore, to preserve the distinction between trout-fishing and fly-fishing. The one is that in which no skill, but a little experience, makes one perfect; and the other is the delicate, elegant angling, which only a quick eye and steady hand can attain by thorough practice. The one is a pleasant sport for a few days; the other is sport of which we never tire.

The basin in which I took the trout I spoke of is one of the loveliest nooks you can well imagine, and is made still more winning by a legend which Willis has connected with it. I doubt him much, but he has always assured me, with a story-teller's most serious face,

and in the approved style, that he got it of an Indian whom he met a long time ago. He has begged me to write out the history, alleging that it needs much filling out, which I can better give it than he. I doubt this, for I believe he has manufactured the whole of it, his Indian historian to the contrary notwithstanding. I will give you the outlines of it.

The basin is not far from our cabin, and has long been a favorite resort for its coolness and beauty. The stream falls into it over a hill of impassable rocks. It is a spot for quiet thinking. The golden sunshine hardly steals through the branches of the old trees, already leaf-covered, and those rays which do fall linger here longer than elsewhere. You can not enter but by a narrow path at the outlet. All around is rocky wall, the top of which is loaded with dense masses of rhododendra, perfectly impenetrable. The basin is nearly circular, and may be twenty yards in breadth, with a margin of a few yards width, carpeted with grass, and moss, and flowers. Near the fall, on the north side, this border widens and extends into an angle of the rock, which, being roofed over, allows a level floor, measuring some fifteen feet across, running to a point at twenty feet depth. We have laid poles and branches across this nook, and have in former years spent many a warm night in this cool retreat.

It was in a year long since forgotten by the natives of these forests, unmarked and unrecorded save in the innermost lines of the oak tree of five centuries or more, that steady, solemn recorder of the storms of years—it

was in a year which must be nameless, since we know nothing of it, that a chief of the Wyandots, wandering on a far trail, came into this beautiful country. The home of his tribe was on the southern bank of the Ohio, where their thousands owned a royal land. I stood, not long ago, on the grave of their chieftains. I stood with reverence on the great mound that pressed on the giant forms and stout hearts of the mighty dead. I had entered other mounds, but I shrank from that. I, for some strange reason that I can not explain, avoided penetrating into its silent secrecy, and called away my workmen who were with me, and turned their spades into a smaller pile, in which we found but a few bones, and an axe, and arrow-heads. I know not but that was the grave of the chief who figures in this history. But I must return to it.

The stranger Indian looked with longing eyes on the brown neck and ruddy cheek, the light form and beautiful foot of the maiden, the daughter of the old chief, in whose lodge he ate dried venison brought by her own hands ; and before he had completed his first meal, with the haughtiness of one accustomed to demand, he had asked her in marriage. But she had long been promised to a chief of her own kindred, and mayhap had learned to love him.

" Ah ! " says Willis, leaning over me, and catching by the glare of that last pine knot the flashing word that I just wrote, " Love, " " ah ! if I could find an Indian girl, with heart untaught in deceit, and eye that has learned its love-light from the calm, all-containing, illimitable

blue—if I could win the love that bubbles up in such a glorious spring, I might yet be won back—” “To what, dear Joe? Ah! my companion and my friend, you have not to be won back to aught. Your hair is growing gray, Joe, but your heart gives no evidence of age! I remember an eye when we were younger, a sunny eye, my tried old friend, that you have not forgotten. Where is its light gone, if not into that all-absorbing brilliance of the blessed land?”

I forget my legend in these episodes. She and her father alike refused the Wyandot, and he returned to his tribe in wrath. He came again, and it was with a thousand warriors at his back, to take his bride. One of those long and bloody wars ensued, in which the Indian tribes of our country so often engaged. It lasted through the winter and the spring, and as the summer sun grew warmer, the stranger had made his home in the lodge of the old chieftain. But his bride was not yet won. In faith, it's easier, as many men have found, to conquer nations than to win an unwilling bride. Somewhere in the forest lingered yet a hardy band, guarding with zealous trust the maiden daughter of their slaughtered chief. In vain the invaders searched, in vain sought trails of their enemies. The latter never left their fastness but for food, and then concealed their trail with a skill which was matchless. In the basin which I have described were gathered thirty warriors, and the few female attendants of the maiden, guarding her retreat. The ground in the angle of the rock was covered with rich panther and wolf skins, and the little

nook was roofed with the same material, and the whole so covered with brush as to defy detection. Trees lay across the outlet of the basin, whose dense leaves wholly concealed it, and the only egress and entrance was by swimming through a narrow opening. From this opening every night more or less of the guard issued, swam out into the stream, down the creek into the river, and up or down the river half a mile before they touched the land, thus defying all skill to find a trail to their concealment.

A Wyandot, sitting one night on the bank of the river, saw something in the water which did not look like any animal he had before seen. He watched it closely as it turned into the creek, and followed stealthily till he saw a man's hand grasp the limb of a tree that lay across the water. The next night, as the first man issued from the retreat, a hatchet, hurled with unerring force, entered his brain, and, with a yell that woke the whippoorwill that slept on the dead oak over him, he sprang from the water, fell back, and his body floated down the bloody stream. An instant after, a dark object entered at the same opening from which the slain man had issued. The chief of the few stout guardsmen saw the red feathers in the tuft of the Wyandot, and waited till he reached an eddy in the current, then struck a swift blow, and, springing into the water, grasped his scalp-lock, and drew his stone knife around the skull. It is marvelous what a passion Indians have always had for those scalp-locks! Another, and another, and another followed their leader into the

basin, and followed him also to his fate. The yells of the combatants rang hideously in the forest; but the cry of the attacked far surpassed the cries of the invaders, and the latter shrank from the fierceness of the wolf at bay in his den.

But the sequel was fearful. No mode of attack availed, and the Wyandots sat down to besiege and starve out the gallant little band. One by one they yielded to the grim death that was now inevitable. Their mournful death-songs were heard day and night in the dim forest arches, and one by one their giant bodies went floating down the stream. They met death bravely in those brave old days!

At length the maiden and her betrothed remained with but ten warriors, gaunt and famine-stricken, yet lion-like in their hunger. Then they devised a plan of escape. The girl was a bold swimmer, as are all Indian girls, and was accustomed to being long under water. It was supposed that the besiegers would not trouble themselves to regard the dead body of a warrior floating by; so, while the ten old warriors chanted a death-song, the young chief lay on the water, and the girl, grasping his hand with one of hers, swam under him as his body floated out at the opening, and down into the river. A Wyandot, with a low grunt of contempt, threw a stone, which struck his breast; but he was firm, and so those faithful two floated away in the solemn night, and fled to a lodge among their distant kindred. One by one the remaining warriors adopted a similar plan; and when the silence of the hold was

so profound that the watchers concluded death had done its work, they entered, and, finding no bodies on the ground, knew at once the cheat, and their yells of rage and disappointment again scared the birds that were hatching their second brood in the branch of the oak above the fall.

Will that answer, Joe, dear?

VI.

Let me sleep.

Owl Creek Cabin, June, 18—.

“LET me sleep, let me sleep, Philip,” said Willis, as I tried to wake him this afternoon, after he had been hard at work sleeping two hours. I did not exactly like the idea of his unsociable employment, and so offered to rouse him, at the same time proposing a walk up the creek, and a trout or two, by way of provender for supper; but his reply was somniferous, in tone as well as words; so I sat down, and began to think what might be understood by his request, “Let me sleep.”

It was uttered mournfully once by a nobleman awaiting his execution for treason. He would fain have forgotten the doom that awaited him, and perhaps dream that he was free and young again.

Most mournfully did the last words of the dying poet embody the idea. I can imagine no more touching exclamation than that which closed the utterance of Lord Byron, as, turning restlessly on his pillow, he murmured, “I must sleep now.” There is something eminently beautiful in the comparison of death with sleep. The hush of profound repose lingers on the lip in one as in the other, and both are alike the cessation of toil. Did

you ever look on a friend sleeping, at a distance sufficient to render the breathing inaudible, and the slight motion of the nostril imperceptible? If you have, you can not but have noticed how perfectly the likeness to death is exhibited. The rigidity of the limbs is perhaps even greater in sleep; for death seldom leaves a limb distorted, or in any position but that of natural slumber.

(Joe is apt to sleep sometimes with his lips apart, and the result is a very unpleasant expression of face, which, if it were not so comical, would be positively alarming.)

I strolled slowly out of the cabin to the bank of the creek, entered the canoe, and paddled into the river, and then up stream a mile or more, thinking of these matters, and walking and paddling rather mechanically than with any idea of what I was doing. I am given to just such turns of absence of mind, and often wake up astonished at the position in which I find myself. I had been led from one thought to another, until I found myself in communion with the far past, my early boyhood. I remembered one who slept the deep sleep so calmly, so holily, that death and sleep, in her case, could not be separated: we knew not when one ceased and the other began to reign.

It was on this wise. Pardon me if this memory prove a wearisome one. I have fancied that my letters were (by this time) read by at least a few who are willing to follow me through *memories* as well as *events*, and who have learned that I do not write after the ap-

proved style of correspondence, but that I write freely from my heart. The true secret of good letter-writing consists in making yourself the *friend* of your correspondent, in admitting him to your confidence, and avoiding any appearance of writing for effect. The compositors will bear me witness (to their cost) that I am neither a slow nor a studied writer. I drive through a letter at rail-road speed, and fold and direct it without re-reading or correcting. I give my readers (who are my correspondents) my unschooled fancies, hopes, memories, exactly as they tumble over one another into my brain, or out of it; and if any are dissatisfied either with my matter or my manner, thinking my subjects more fit for private converse than public letters, I have only to say to such that I write to the hearts of a few which I know answer my own (one heart how faithfully!), and that those who do not like the letters are not asked to regard themselves as my correspondents.

And now for my memory this afternoon—a memory of long ago, of the brave old days, the buried days of boyhood! Buried, but not forgotten. Sepulchred and epitaphed. "Green be the turf above them." Many fair flowers bloom on the graves of those days, and cheer me with their delicate beauty; and when I am forced to crush them, they reproach me with their balmy odors. God forbid that those flowers should cease to bloom on the graves of my boyhood and youth!

I knew a fairy child, when I too was a child, whose fifteenth winter found her matchlessly beautiful. She was as gentle as a memory, as lovely as a dream, as

winning as a hope! Golden tresses floated gayly around a calm, broad forehead, and when the sunlight lingered among them (it loved to linger there), she seemed a very angel. Her lip was as delicately chiseled as ever lip that drank nectar on Olympus. Nay, it was a sweeter lip than those that of old wooed and won the sons of God to taste their ruby wine! But the melody that was always flowing from that lip may not be told of now. There be hearts grown old, and ears dulled by the thunders of life, which have thrilled with that melody, and which, in the still hours of communion with the past, even yet thrill with the saintly tones that float along the stream of years! There be eyes weary with the sunshine and the clouds of long life, that grow dimmer even now with tears, when that voice comes so lovingly from out the gloomy past. Oh, sainted idol of our home and hearts! When shall the sword that guards *our home* be sheathed, and weary, wayward, world-worn Adam return to Eden, and our hearts to thee? Death is the flaming sword that guards the gate of Paradise! When shall they die who mourn so long for thee?

She was very beautiful, and we loved her as the beautiful are always loved; and her pure and gentle soul bound us yet closer to her than that pre-eminent beauty.

William B—— was a boy, my junior by a year or two, who loved her, and with boyish heart wooed and won her love. It was in my own old home on the river that all this occurred, of which I now write the history. Per-

haps the memory of our close attachment makes the memory of Kate's beauty brighter. But others live who think as I, that she was of the fairest of the children of earth.

But I weary you with writing of her beauty, while I neglect the story of her sleeping; for sleep she did, at length, profoundly. I never saw a fairer vision under coffin-lid. A smile lingered like a Savior's kiss upon her matchless lip, and her brow was calm as a thought of heaven! It was impossible to believe that death was in that angel form. But I am now as much too fast as I was before too slow.

It was a moony night in June—just such a night as this in which I write, but somewhat later in the month. We sat together on the old piazza, looking at the noble river rolling within a rifle shot of our seats. There were others there, and the round moon seemed a familiar companion of the merry group gathered in the old house. Do you remember it, Joe? Do you remember that evening, S——? You, dear L——? Ah! you remember it, I know well.

The children, Kate and Will, were allowed to sit alone, apart, and looking on the water and the moon weave fabrics of the moonbeams to clothe their hopes with. They faded sooner than the moonbeams faded! There was a strange languor in Kate's large blue eye, and a hesitation in her tone, which at length caused me to ask if she was well. "Perfectly," was her reply, "except a slight headache; but my spirits are dull enough. I have the blues, I believe."

"I'm sorry for you," said I, and I did verily pity her. She was a lonely child ; a waif, homeless, because her home was sorrowful, motherless, and having a father who was a heartless, cold, stern man.

At length the elder part of the family left the piazza, and with the usual directions to take care of their health, Kate and Will were left sitting alone on the steps. The moon was rising higher, and Kate looked up into the sky, and spoke no word for a long time, until Will saw that she was weeping.

"Kate, dear Kate, what is the matter," said he, with a boy's freedom, flinging his arms around her neck. "I don't know—I don't know. There's something so sad in that blue sky, I couldn't help it," said she, as her head fell on his arm, and she wept bitterly. With a child's eagerness, he sought to find the cause of that deep grief, and, if he could, remove it. Little did he then know of the strange sympathies of the soul. Little did he dream that she he so loved was listening, though she knew it not herself, to the voices of the dear ones away in the sky, calling her to join them, and weeping so ungovernably because she was to leave the sunny scenes of time.

They talked of death as children talk, and she said she had always feared it, but of late had thought it might after all be pleasant to rest in the earth, if she might know that daisies would be planted at her head, and "forget-me-not" at her feet. So touching were the words she spoke in that low voice, that Will at length wept too, and then, with a gay laugh, a carol of wild

merriment, she proposed to serenade the family, and so her bird-like voice warbled a melody that I have heard wandering among the stars every clear night from that to this. Then they spoke a little while of plans for the morrow, and then, with arms around each other, walked up and down the long piazza, and then, with a long kiss, parted for the night. Half an hour later he heard her voice at his door. He was not yet undressed, and, opening it, saw her wrapped in a light dressing-gown. She asked him to come to the parlor, and sit with her, and talk or read to her. Her head ached wildly, and she could not sleep. He gladly accompanied her. She lay on a lounge. He brought her a pillow for her head, and laid his own on it by hers, with his cheek pressed against her dear cheek. He has often told me of that evening and night. He calmed her with boyish prattle, and a hundred times they promised faithful love, sealing their promises with kisses. The moon stole round the corner of the old house till it peered into the window in whose recess she lay, and a silver beam fell on her white forehead. She turned her head, and pressed her lips to his, and gently wound her arm around his neck, and, nestling her warm cheek closer against his, said, most melodiously, "I shall sleep quietly now; don't leave me, Will;" and so she slept; and when the dead arise, our Kate will wake again, but not till then.

For seven days she slept thus heavily. Her cheek grew paler daily, and her breath more feeble, and her holy heart beat less and less heavily. I know not when she slept the deeper sleep. I sat by her side, but saw

no change. I could not for four hours detect her breathing, yet a glass indicated its existence; nor did we know, till long after she had passed away, that our gentle one had joined the Seraphim. I bowed my lips to her forehead, but it was cold, and its icy coldness chilled me. I raised her hand, and it fell back motionless. I pressed my hand on her breast, but it was hushed. The slumber of our idol was as deep as it was beautiful, and so we buried her.

Four years ago I walked on the shore of the river with my old friend B——. There is no sanctuary on earth so sacred as the temple of a crushed heart. Such was his. He died that fall. I doubt not she was waiting for him within the gate of heaven? I doubt not when the flaming sword flashed between him and us in the sunny Eden of our dreams, her arms were wound around his neck, and her dear lips mingled her words of love with kisses.

I remember his hopes expressed to me in a moment of passionate grief as we walked together. I had reminded him of the beauty of her last words, "I shall sleep quietly now. Don't leave me, Will!"

"I will not leave you, darling," said he, with a burst of agony; "I will not leave you, darling, for you have not left me! You have been faithful in these lonesome years. They measure not time where you are, Kate, but they know how mournfully we measure it, and your kiss has never, never failed me in the evening of each day. The evening of my day is coming, Kate. My head must find its last white pillow, and then, then, I

know, your cheek will be against mine, and in the close embrace of love we shall sleep quietly, dear Kate!"

My story is told. I have almost been weeping over the memory, but I have failed to make it as touching to you as it is to us.

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VII.

S u m m a r y.

New York, July, 18—.

THE last day on the river was a pleasant and a sorrowful one, as the last day always proves. Pleasant, because we devote ourselves usually to one long day's sport, and sorrowful, because we look on the trees and water, the hills, and the sky, and the clouds, as on pleasant friends with whom we must perforce part, and no one knows for how long a time.

Very fortunately for a plan we had concocted, the rains had been heavy for a week before we left; and although the creek had subsided almost to its usual condition, the river remained high, and we constructed a raft of small dimensions, but sufficiently large to carry ourselves and a small weight of fish. We had arranged with P—— to meet us with his horses at the clearing ten miles below, and to have with him a sufficiency of ice to preserve some trout until we might reach civilization.

At daybreak, therefore, on the morning of the last day, we were up and out, over the hills, to the three-mile basin, intending to whip the water down toward the cabin.

It was a glorious morning, I assure you—a morning

when one could not choose but love the mountain land, so calmly did it bid the night good-by, and meet the morning's kiss—blushingly, but joyously. The air was cool and delicious. You could fancy it playing over the hill-tops, and eddying around in the valleys, and gathering a wealth of odors from the opening flowers, and bearing its store of perfumes to other and less favored places. I fancied, dear —, that you were that morning in the saddle on your noble gray (your brave horse bears his gentle mistress nobly always, as if conscious of a pride in his burden), and that on the brow of the hill (I will watch the sunrise with you from that hill before another month is passed) you paused, and caught the western breeze, and waved your cap gayly in the air, and shouted as your locks flew out on the wind, and that you wished my presence (egotistical, am I?); and, fancying thus, I touched my fingers to my lips, and held them up high, that the wind might bear to you the evidence of my thought of you.

Joe was in precisely such a mood as I, and both of us were ready to see our friends, albeit not at all anxious to return to the city. I suppose a compromise which would have brought them out to our cabin would have satisfied him. I know it would have contented me. But we must needs be moving. It was fifteen minutes after five when my fly first touched the water, and it lacked but ten minutes of six when I landed the fish that took it. This delay was caused by a provoking dive he made under a root, and a general twisting and tangling of my line, which it took me half

an hour to rectify ; meanwhile, the fish making vain attempts to release himself. Joe took half a dozen fine fellows during this interval, and he had apparently emptied the basin of all it contained. We then walked down the stream, making an occasional cast in such a way as to leave no square yard of water untried, and yet lifted not a fin. It was nearly or quite ten o'clock when we reached the Punch Bowl, and I had only taken my first fish.

I was somewhat in advance of Joe, and threw my fly over a still, deep spot, just above the fall of the stream. The fly was now the common red heckle, carefully dressed, and my hook was covered with a piece of a small worm, which made not a bad body. A fish rose, but missed the hook, and I could not coax him out. I tried again, and again, and again, but in vain. Every fly in my book was used, even to a large salmon fly which I found stowed away in one corner. But I could not raise a trout. I determined to manufacture a fly, and sat down to it. My book contained a supply of material, and I very leisurely constructed one of the queerest looking objects a trout ever looked up at. It was a bright crimson silk body, with brown wings and grayish legs, a swallow tail of lead color, and a head of black. Joe came up and looked over my shoulder as I finished it, and laughed heartily at my idea.

But the trout took it ; the wherefore I leave for others to explain. It only concerned me that a good two pounds of fish was on the end of my line at the instant the fly fell on the ripple, and the next instant

trout and line went over the fall into the lower basin. You may remember, from my former description of this basin, that it is impossible to reach it from above. My anxiety was to follow my fish ; but I could not, except by a long circuit, and must, of course, let go my rod. An instant's thought determined me. I saw a large piece of dry bark at my feet, and, seizing it, I tangled it in the line, so as to float my rod, which would otherwise sink, and gave rod and line to the water. As the rod shot over the fall, I dove into the underbrush, and came out, within three minutes, below the basin, which I entered, and saw my bark and rod floating in an eddy. I swam in for it, and, landing, found my fish still fast, and soon succeeded in killing him.

We had now already ten pounds of fish, and our anxiety was to keep it till evening. We accordingly constructed a sort of *cachet* of stones, under a part of the sheet of the fall, and deposited them, and brought to this place all which we took during the day. We continued to fish with more or less success until about three o'clock, when we returned to dinner. The next three hours were passed in preparations for departure, and at six we were ready to bid the forest good-by.

At this time Black decided to accompany us to the clearing. He had promised to sell his long canoe to a settler at the bridge, and determined to go down with it now, and conclude the sale. Our raft was therefore voted a decided waste of labor, and we made ready the trout, and, with paddles in hand, pushed out from the creek into the river. The sun was setting behind the

west mountain as we lost sight of the cabin, and the stars cheered us as we passed slowly down the stream. Occasionally a night-bird's scream, or a strange sound in the forest, overcame for an instant the monotonous melody of our paddles, and once in a while Joe's voice gave utterance to some carol of merriment or a plaintive song. Now we dashed swiftly through the narrow pass where the roar of the water quite drowned our voices, and anon we floated out into the starlight on a calm, lake-like sheet, where the sky was as clear below as above, and again the dash of the paddle was musical. Under the high precipice of the Cedar Knoll we floated close up to the rock, and there was a strangely melancholy echo to Willis's voice as he concluded a mournful but beautiful song :

“ Two locks, and they are wondrous fair,
Left me that vision mild,
The brown is from the mother's hair,
The blonde is from the child.
And when I see that lock of gold,
Pale grows the evening's red,
But when the dark lock I behold,
I wish that I were dead !”

With an occasional delay of five or ten minutes at the cabins of hunters, to say good-by, we reached the clearing at about ten o'clock, and found P—— waiting for us. The horses were in harness, and our fish, within five minutes, securely packed in ice, and in the light spring box. We exchanged a hearty shake of the hand with Black, promised him the usual monthly letter of news from New York, and, springing into the wagon, dashed swiftly away for the east.

VIII.

A Pleasant Day.

Stonington, July, 18—.

I AM sitting by the window, looking eastward at the silver path which reaches from directly under the window to the moon, now quite above the horizon. It is nearly midnight, and after enjoying two hours of unalloyed pleasure, which was preceded by a stroll through the village, and a lounge on the end of the breakwater, listening to the music of voices and waves, I have seized pen and paper to give you a share of my pleasure. If I could by any means convey to you, who are wearying in the city, some idea of the delicious coolness of this ocean air, and the intense beauty of this deep sky, I have no doubt you would resign business without delay, and I should have the pleasure of welcoming you to Stonington. Let me sketch the amusement of a single day, and see if I can not tempt you to try the Sound for a night, and Stonington for a week.

This air comes gloriously in at the window. Rather cool, too—even to chilliness, at times; but a long breath is a luxury, and I am making amends for the last few days in New York. If I can long enough keep myself at this paper, and away from the temptation of the pleasantest of all company, and the most beautiful of

all views, and the most melodious of all sounds, that faint, far sound of the surf, I will write you at least an apology for not writing a letter. For how can I find time among these scenes to write? Take yesterday, for example. Waking to a sense of happy existence, a pure air, and no restraint of business or engagement, I found no difficulty in securing capital company for a sail in the bay. We trolled for blue-fish a couple of hours, and then went over to Watch Hill. Long before we reached the land, we heard the thunder of the Atlantic on the opposite side of the beach, and, mounting the hill, threw ourselves down to look at the great sea. How sublimely it lay in the sunshine! Broad, calm, solemnly grand—a sleeping monarch—terrible in its repose, yet pre-eminently beautiful. I need not, to you, recount my love for the ocean. You know that it is in my soul, and that I can, not seldom, catch the surf-roar in my longing ears, even at my cabin, hundreds of miles away from the sea. But now, it has been so very long since I stood on the shore or rocked on the waves, that I come back as a schoolboy comes to his home—rather, I should say, as the schoolboy to his school, returning after vacation—only I return right joyously to this my school. I heard the voice of my teacher lovingly yesterday, and coming nearer, and nearer, and nearer, to catch more distinctly the tones of her voice, I could no longer resist the impulse of my love, but rushed with a shout of joy into her white, gleaming, and outstretched arms. You should have seen how tenderly she held me to her breast, how gently

sang to me, how solemnly renewed her holy teachings, and how humbly yet joyously I lay on that heaving breast, and heard the voices of truth and of affection. Truth ! hath not the sea grown old enough to know and deal in truth ? Can these hoar locks be other than the locks of wise old age ?

I have stood, day after day, gazing at the great falls, but Niagara never conveyed to my mind a sense of the sublime. It is only in this boundless sea, across which no eye but the eye of God can look, no hand but the hand which holds the stars can stretch, no voice but His voice who speaks in the surf-thunder can prevail—it is only in this solemn waste of waters that I behold the Infinite reflected. The thunder-cloud seemed always a messenger from the Eternal, and its voice the voice of a destroying angel ; but the sea seemed always to me as if the Spirit still moved above its surface, and the sound of the breaking surge, as it began dimly far up the beach, and rolled heavily down to my feet, and died away far along the shore, like the voice of God speaking in tones intelligible to the ear of a mortal. Niagara is *finite*, having a beginning and an ending. The ocean is infinite, without beginning or ending, and continents are but islands around which it moans.

We stood together on the hill, and looked eastward. Block Island lay dimly on the horizon ; Montauk, in the south, loomed high, and the light-house looked as lonely as ever. I imagined a pleasant party there, which I would gladly have joined had circumstances allowed it.

The noon passed, and we shot gayly out into the bay

with our little craft, and so homeward. In the afternoon, H—— suggested the idea of going a “*crabbing*.” “Capital,” said I; and we went. Imagine a man of about my size, with pantaloons rolled up as far as pantaloons legs admit of being rolled up, wading deliberately along shore, on the pebbly bottom, making desperate thrusts at crabs with a small landing-net. They came out from the eel-grass to sun themselves, I suppose, and, at the approach of a stranger, you would be astonished to see the velocity with which they move, sideways and backward, and around, and around, and every way but forward. A cautious approach is necessary, and a very slow advance of the net until it is near one; then you thrust it under him, and *land him in a basket*. We took a hundred or so in two hours, and pulled slowly homeward in the evening.

The next operation of the day was to throw off fishing toggery, and make one’s self presentable in society; after which, we strolled down to the depôt, and waited the arrival of the Boston train. The news being examined, and a few words exchanged with friends passing through to New York, we resumed our walk; but meeting a pleasant party of ladies and gentlemen somewhere in the neighborhood of half past nine o’clock, it occurred to me that we might as well run down the bay, and see the moon rise from the ocean. My proposition met with ready approval, and it required but the addition of shawls to the ladies’ accoutrements to complete our preparations. In a few moments we were gliding quietly by the head of the breakwater, and as we pass-

ed the end of the point, the moon came calmly into the sky.

That, after all, was the pleasantest hour of the day. I felt little inclined to speak, for a long schooling in the world has taught me wholly to suppress these emotions which many regard as affectations, and more look on as follies ; but, baring my forehead to the cool night wind, I gazed at the stars, and the dark surface of the water, and the slow ascending moon, and felt within me, stirred gloriously, the pride of an immortal. I knew that for my eye God made the ocean and the moon ; I knew that for my ear the melody of the waves was attuned.

Then some one spoke of being buried in the sea, and for an instant I forgot my rule, and spoke of how difficult I had always found it to imagine the poetry of flowers by a grave, when six feet of damp earth were between the sleeper and the violets, and was going on to speak of the poetry of an ocean burial, which I, who have no thought of the disposition of these weary limbs when I shall have done with them, have still oftentimes imagined to be the only grave that could win me with any especial poetry. Yet none seemed to agree with me—none, at least, who spoke : some were silent. Mayhap the thought of death at all to the young and the gay-hearted came sadly in that moonlight ; mayhap they, younger than I, had learned more of the same sad lessons which I have learned, or mayhap they looked with me to the fair land beyond the blue above. It was holy company, that of the silent stars, and the murmuring sea, and the gentle and the beautiful, yet very

startling to hear those glad-toned voices so seriously discussing the poetry of the grave. In the very midst of what I was saying, I paused, and, as the thought of the deep sleep that must one day dim those star-lit eyes came mournfully over me, with memories of tears wept over graves, and vigils kept over the memories of the young, the loved, the lost, and white hands folded meekly across unheaving breasts, and lips that once gave life with kisses, closed in the calm but maddening beauty of serene repose, I bowed my head, and watched the rushing water. Then came the earnest, healthful teaching of the ocean to me. I heard her voice, clear and distinct. Some ripples break in their first murmuring, and some grow to be waves with crests of foam; but the ripple breaks with a song of joy on the rocks, while the billow, weary with long wandering, and laden with sea-weed, and drift-wood, the wrecks of the ships it has borne at sea, falls, heavily moaning, on the shore. The moonbeams linger joyfully among the golden tresses of youth, but silver with the whiteness of desolation the foam of the breaking surge. So I felt that it mattered little, after all, how soon deep sleep overpowers us, so we are only ready to sleep well.

It was wearing on toward the small hours when we bore up for home. Saw you ever a day more pleasantly employed?

I am called from my paper to listen to the waves on the Point; I can not resist longer. It would not be surprising if I were tempted out on the water again to-night, late as it is.

IX.

The Hudson.

Saratoga, August, 18—.

IT was a golden evening as we left New York, a pleasant company of six, composed of much the same persons who were with us last summer on this same route. Willis was in an uncommonly good humor (I mean by that that his humor is always good, but now was extraordinarily so), and as he sat by our kind friend and companion, Mrs. —, you would have set him down for a man ten years younger at the least. The rest of the company (for various reasons nameless) were of the choicest of our friends.

At length we saw as calm a sunset as ever hallowed mountain peak, and the gray twilight came quietly over us, bathing the world in the waves of its sombre light. It now grew chilly. We were entering the Highlands when it became quite dark, and, transferring our seats to the promenade-deck, we wrapped shawls around the ladies, and an hour slipped along unmarked and unnoticed. At length we yielded to the influence of the scenery around us, for Joe and I were among familiar mountains, and passing many scenes that are sacred in our memories. As by a wizard's wand, the past swept majestically by us, with all its treasures of love and

hope, of beauty and of joy. Each mountain peak was dimly surrounded with a phantom host, and every valley teemed with young-eyed visions. We lived over again the silvery moonlight nights of boyhood; we climbed again the mountain crag; we breasted again the river's mimic waves. They were heavy billows to us in boyhood, as were the waves of life too; it was difficult to surmount them. But, since then, our arms have battled countless times with the ocean surf, and our souls have outlived many storm-tossed surges of life.

"Philip," said a melodious voice at my side, after I had been some time silent, "Philip, I'm in a melancholy mood of a sudden; come and sit away from the crowd, and tell me a story, such a one as you told me at Saratoga last summer, on the lake; not such as you told the other day at ——; more sad than that. I want a sad story."

"With pleasure, my dear ——. But why are you sad to-night? There is nothing in this glorious mountain land that is tear-moving, as in the surf-roar or the forest wind. Why sad to-night?"

"I know not exactly why. You know there is a strange connection between the beautiful and the sad. Tears often express the extremest emotion of pleasure. But you seem sad too. Why sad to-night? Come, I'll question you, as you do me. You had not spoken for ten minutes when I called you here, and you did not laugh at Mr. Willis's last story, capital as it was."

"I had heard it before, perhaps."

"No, you never heard it, before nor then. Your eyes were on the mountains yonder, and your thoughts in the grave of the years, I am sure—were they not? Tell me. *Confitere, Confitere, mi*—what shall I call you? *Frater*?"

"Call me disciple. I learn all gentleness of you."

"Hush! hush! no badinage to-night. We lose the glory of the night by wasting it in mockeries. Come, tell me a story. Speak very low, and I will dream myself into the scenes you tell me of."

"Be it so, then. You see that peak yonder against the sky, calmly looking up to God in the starlight?"

"I see it," said the low voice.

"Look fixedly at its base. Peer into the darkness. You will see a grave-yard there."

"I see it. The stars glitter on every stone, and sanctify the moss with holy radiance."

"And one grave in that yard—under the elm-tree in the upper corner?"

"I see—I see; green turf covers it, and the night wind rustles among the leaves, prematurely withered and fallen in summer time."

"Look now at my forehead. This deep line was the first one drawn on it, and that was on the day yonder grave was filled."

"Go on—go on—I listen;" and a white cheek fell on a tiny hand, and two blue eyes looked up into mine with earnest attentiveness; and I, not daring to fix my gaze where I would willingly have fixed it, on those speaking eyes, looked at the shore, and strove to modulate a voice

more accustomed to the cry of the chase, or to shout in the surf, than to the low tones best fitted for such a 'historic.'

"In the days of lang syne, I had a friend who lived up yonder on the hill side. A score of years makes marvelous changes in us! He was a boy of keen intellect, and surpassed us all at school. There was something very noble about him, which won him respect every where. But the most marked feature of his character was an ungovernable ambition. 'I must be a great man, May,' he would say to his beautiful sister, a year older than he; 'I must be great. I can't live my whole life here. I must and will make people know me. How grand it must be to be known all over the world.' As he grew older, these aspirations developed themselves in intense application to study; yet he was a good companion, and a leader in all our mountain expeditions and every sort of adventure. His sister was a sweet child, who divided his worship with his ambition. She seemed to be the only earthly object, after his parents' death, which he could not sacrifice to his unceasing thirst.

"Forever thus! With us as with him. We waste the spring-time of our years, our very life-blood, in searches after—what? Bubbles, that break when we grasp them; phantoms, that continually elude us, or whose passionate kisses we loathe and abhor when we embrace them. We live for glorious cheats! for school-boy dreams, that we forget not till we die.

"That sister and brother formed a union which had

in it a moral beauty and sublimity, that did not fail to impress me, young as I was, with a force I can hardly describe. I have from that day to this regarded a brother's love for a sister as the purest and holiest of earthly bonds. Her mild eye might well win love from him, as it did from me—from all.

"The hour of desolation came to them, as it comes to all men. It came with clouds and storms; but as the night gathered, a rift in the clouds let through the golden sun-light. Harry was strong, but he grew weak, and his clear, glad eye dimmed sadly—then grew wild and bright with fever, and he murmured in mad dreams the hopes of a lifetime. The fever-storm swept by, and left a still, dark evening on his soul, but he waited his end in peace. Yet once in a while he pressed his lips together, and muttered, 'This is hard — hard — hard.'

"One day he lay in silence so long that they fancied he was sleeping. Sleep came not yet. At length, as the day wore on, and the sunshine, streaming across the room, fell on the grate fire, dimming the coals so that they seemed a heap of ashes, he fixed his eye on them, and suddenly exclaimed (I could guess easily the train of ideas from that fire to his sudden exclamation), 'May, May, I shall be great yet!' 'I hope so, Harry,' she said, sobbing, for she knew he was dying. 'No, no, not here, not here, May,' he said; 'I'm a boy now, but I'm going to sleep now, and I'll wake a man! Don't you understand me, May? I'll be tallest among the angels! Think of that! What matter how great I am here?'

What's a great man on earth to a great angel in Heaven? Call them in, May. I'm in haste to be away now. I never thought of this before.'

"'What! in haste to leave us, Harry?'

"'No, no—not that, not that. You'll all come there directly. How glad you'll be to see me high in heaven! Think of it, May!'

"So they were all called in, and heard his voice in the last tones of ambitious mortality. He said that earth was as nothing compared with that fair land, and speaking thus occasionally for an hour or more, he suddenly grasped May's hand in his left hand, and, raising the other, waved it above his head, and we could fancy we heard the glad shout of his enfranchised soul as it sprang forth from the clay. Yes, we heard it! It was faint, far off, like the sound of a voice falling from a mountain top to the valley below—a clear, distinct, prolonged shout, the *Io Triumphe* of heaven! So sleep came at length. And, if there be any progress in heaven, I doubt not Harry has surpassed all others in the grand aim of knowledge, 'to know Him whom to know is eternity's work.'"

"And May?"

"She, gentle as the memory she cherished, grew up a lovely girl, and was married years ago. She is the wife of a distinguished lawyer; none other, in fact, than the lady whose carriage set you down at the boat this evening."

"Mrs. ———?"

"The same."

"Thanks for the story. It chimes well with my mood. What is Mr. Willis looking about the deck after?"

"After you, I imagine. I overheard your very excellent father expressing some degree of anxiety about you just now. Here comes Joe."

"Found at last! I've looked under twenty-five bonnets to find this pretty face, and here it is."

"Mr. Willis, you're in a queer humor. You never thought my face pretty before."

"Philip has been telling you some fish story to lighten it up; you've no idea how cheerful and pleasant it looks."

"Joe, if you don't stop your nonsense, I'll lay hands on you."

"Then I'm off. Miss ——, your father desired to know where you were, and I'll report you in safe keeping."

So the evening passed, and it was long after midnight before we went to our rooms.

X.

Cape May.

Cape May, August, 18—.

“LET go the mainsail ; keep her up, Ben—steady so—we’ll take a couple of reefs, and that bonnet out of the jib. If I’m not mistaken, it’ll blow a stiff one before night.”

“Where might we be, captain ?” said the doctor, holding on by the lee-rail, as the words were jerked out of his mouth by the uneasy tossing of the Phantom.

“We *might* be inside of that beach yonder, doctor, and very comfortable at that too ; but we happen to be outside of it ; and that beach is known, I believe, as the Island Beach ; so called, I suppose, from the fact that it is the only one, of a dozen, between Sandy Hook and Cape May, that’s connected with the main land. But bear a hand here, doctor, and when we’ve reefed we’ll take an observation. I should prefer somewhat to be in Barnegat Bay. This wind’s hauling off to the southward, and we’ll have a rough night of it.”

Joe, and the doctor, and myself had gotten the Phantom into trim for a short cruise, and determined to go to Cape May first. It was a glorious morning when we stood down the bay, but the wind had been easterly for several days, and it was with some apprehension of a

storm that we passed the Hook, and hugged the New Jersey shore until four o'clock in the afternoon. We thought we had made capitally good time; but the breeze, which had hitherto been very fresh, was now growing into a small gale, and we took the necessary precautions for a rough night. I was half inclined to make for the next inlet, but concluded, on the whole, that we would weather it.

Night came on us as we made Long Beach, and the wind was now somewhat alarming.

You should have seen the Phantom staggering into that sea, breaking through the huge waves that threatened to send the tiny craft to the bottom, laughingly dancing over one, as merrily plowing through another, shaking herself as she came up like a duck, and settling on the surface for another bout with the monsters. It was a grand sight. I was lashed to the mainmast, and the spray went flying over my head, and blinded my eyes, and soaked me, body and clothes, with cool salt water, but it was great sport. Joe looked at me for some time rather anxiously. In fact, he was afraid that, in the excitement of the moment, I would be overboard, as he had once seen me. That was in a moonshiny night, off Montauk, years ago. I stood looking into the blue eyes of the waves, and at length, as a white gleaming arm seemed to be reached out to me, I sprang over to the embrace so lovingly offered me. Joe was then at the wheel, and the Phantom came about in an instant, and he was in the water by my side, offering me an arm, as if he fancied I had intended to commit sui-

oide, but took it for granted I was now in my senses. I laughed at him, threw water in his face, and, seizing the low gunwale of the boat as she went by, lifted myself in, and offered a hand to help him. That was a delicious bath, and it was making free with the waves in a way that I liked. No danger of my trying that now though, when the Phantom was driving wildly before a northeaster, and the waves were in their maddest humor. I confess it was hard to recognize my gentle teacher in this stormy ocean. Yet at times I heard the same dear voice blending with the wind, and the mournful wail of the wind as it answered. Sometimes I fancied the storm would yield, and the sea have a calm night's rest. But by midnight it was cloudy, and the gale was steadily increasing. It hauled into the south rather more at this time, and we shipped more water. I sent Joe and the doctor below to sleep at about eleven o'clock, and they did sleep, with apparently little difficulty, for I did not see them again until four in the morning.

Meantime I got aft to the wheel, and, with Ben and Smith on deck, managed to keep her pretty well into the wind, and at the same time make no slow progress. You can imagine the grandeur of that night. The sea was in wild commotion, and the waves tossed us hither and thither with no reverence whatever. Besides all this, to confess the truth, although I dared not intimate it to the men or my companions, I did not half like some of the new rigging of the Phantom, and was afraid every moment that some of those strained ropes would

part, and we go ashore on Absecon. I was, on the whole, not a little glad to find the wind going down toward daybreak, and, just as the first streak of dawn was among the clouds to seaward, I put her away for the Henlopen lights, which began to show above the horizon. At seven o'clock we made Cape Island, and ran down to it by nine.

We landed in our boat. I enjoyed a laugh at a boatload from a yacht lying off near us. They were evidently fresh hands at surf-riding, and allowed their boat to fall into the trough of the waves too near the shore. In an instant she broached to, and was turned upside down, spilling her contents into the foam of the breaker, and all—men, oars, coats, boxes, &c.—went in a confused mass up the beach.

We landed without difficulty, and the doctor bade us an affectionate good-by. He has gone off on a cruise in the Phantom, and is to return and pick us up in about a week.

Take a seat with me by this window. Do you see that light spot in the southeastern horizon? The last ray of the sun is leaving it now. It is the white sail of the Phantom, bound for the Chesapeake.

Imagine me, then, most comfortably installed at the Atlantic; and, take my word for it, this is the best of all watering-places. The whole arrangement of everything is most capital. You can't help being comfortable, and enjoying yourself. Saratoga is stupid, Newport frigid, Cape May delicious. Look out yonder at that surf. Is it not glorious? See those swimmers.

Will you believe that that lady, whom you saw, but an hour ago, shaking gayly her luxuriant curls from her face, and listening to mawkish sentimentality in the drawing-room (Joe said then that he saw a sneer of contempt in her joyous eye), is the same bold swimmer that is dashing away the foam-caps of the waves outside the surf? Come and go down with me, and I'll introduce you to her. "What! out there!" did you exclaim? Certainly, out there. I introduced Joe to her this morning in the same place. He was remarking on the fine picking for sharks out of fifteen hundred bathers then in the surf, and, seeing one lady and gentleman outside of all the others, I proposed to him to swim out, and be ready to aid her in case of accident. No sooner said than done. I had no fear of sharks, for I never heard of one attacking any one on our shores; nor do I believe the blue shark will touch a man, so long as he can get fish to eat; but I always fear for a lady who is far from shore, lest her strength should fail her. It requires a very great degree of coolness to swim in a heavy sea. Imagine my surprise, on swimming past the lady and gentleman I have mentioned, at finding that it was none other than my friend, Mr. —, and his daughter, Miss —, with whom I have swum many an hour in rougher water than that; a lady perhaps unequalled as a swimmer in this country (and, while I'm about it, I may as well add that you are the greatest horsewoman too, my dear —).

"Hurra!" exclaimed a clear, ringing voice; "hurra! Who would have thought of meeting you here! I've

met you, I believe, at every place imaginable, from Niagara to the American Museum ; but the idea of meeting you outside the surf at Cape May is unexampled ! Father, father, here's Philip !”

“Where ?” said Mr. —, puffing, and for the first time aware of my presence. “I'm glad to see you, Phil. I'd give you a hand, if I had one to spare.”

“Here's one for both of us, then !” said the lady, a much more expert swimmer than her father, at the same time reclining gracefully on one side, and offering me her left hand as she swam with her right. I took this opportunity to introduce Joe, and it was done in the most approved style of drawing-room introductions. “My dear Miss —, allow me to present to your kind notice” (here a foam-cap broke in my face, and I paused an instant) “my friend and ally, Mr. Willis, of whom you have heard me speak.” “It gives me great pleasure to meet Mr. Willis, whom I have long known by most excellent reputation.” “Miss — will please suppose me to make a graceful bow,” said Joe, most comically, with his mouth just above the edge of the water : “the nearest approximation to one which I can devise under the circumstances is a dive ; but I fear that would be rather ludicrous than otherwise.”

We laughed heartily at Joe's apology, and swam shoreward.

The day passes delightfully here. None of your dull, stupid, unemployed hours, such as you have at Saratoga. After breakfast, a large number of the ladies attend prayers in the chapel, and (rather a sudden

change) proceed from the prayers to the pistol-galleries and the billiard-rooms. And there are not a few good shots among these same fair ladies, and as many good hands at a cue. At eleven o'clock all hands go down to the water. Imagine five hundred or a thousand bathers together at a time, and you have a brilliant scene, worth going a little way to see. You will hardly recognize the same faces yonder and in the drawing-room, or at the Kursaal. Lunch follows the bath ; then driving, dinner, lounging, and an evening of pure merriment. This ocean air is glorious !

XI.

An Old Friend.

New York, September, 18—.

THE evening before I left Cape May, I met a face at the Kursaal on which I looked an hour or more with an interest I could not explain to myself. It was the face of a lovely woman ; yet the beauty which was so attractive was mingled with a strange expression of discontent, or moroseness, which gave a singular air to her appearance. There was something, too, in that face which was familiar to me ; and once, as I caught the sound of her voice, I felt that thrill of emotion which a remembered strain of music produces when one is wandering in far lands. I started forward as I heard the tone which so affected me, and spoke hurriedly to my companion, Mrs. —, asking if she knew the lady. My own voice was rather louder than it should have been ; and, as I turned toward her again, I caught her full black eye directed with a searching gaze on my face. A dozen times afterward I met that gaze, and as often caught a strange smile, almost a sneer, on her lip, which more than all else puzzled me ; for I knew that I had somewhere seen that smile before.

It was after midnight that I took my accustomed

stroll by the surf-side. The music of the water was unusually deep and solemn, and, as Willis expressed it, "the waves were telling stories of more important and more mournful import than usual." We had thrown ourselves down on the sand, and were lying silent, and I, at least, was dreaming of distant scenes, and ears which the surf-roar was elsewhere singing to sweet slumber, when we were aroused by the approach of a gentleman and lady, who passed us. I heard that same rich voice; and now, though I could not see the face, I knew the same smile was there, for the words uttered were bitterly sad in tone and meaning. They appeared to be a reply to some remark made by the gentleman by her side.

"Better to die, then — better, far, to die! What is death, after all? Life, having lost all joy, ceases, and the aching brain slumbers. The world is little better than such as we have lived, and will be no worse than we die. Its soil, indeed, will be somewhat richer."

"No, Ellen," said a calm, deep voice, somewhat broken by age, "no, no; you reason wrongly. If the world is no better than we have lived, we should live longer, and so make it better."

I could hear nothing more of the conversation as they passed, but I was again wondering who the lady could be, when Joe rose, and broke out into one of his strange comminglings of truth and dream, poetry and fact.

"I wish I could live in it," said he, in a musing tone as he looked at the sea, "I wish I could die in it. To lie down quietly on some green bank under the water

and sleep—ah! one might then sleep* well. I say, Phil?”

“Well, Joe?” said I, rising, and looking at him.

“Do you see that large wave out yonder, that seems hurrying as if anxious to dash on the beach?”

“I do,” said I, waiting his continuance.

“And do you see that foam-cap on it, breaking even now, and now gone? Is it not beautiful? Well, I’ll tell you what I was fancying—that that wave was like some lives as it comes shoreward, dark in the main, yet calm, deep, steadily pressing on. Once in a while a bright gleam on its surface gladdens it, but those gleams are gone on the instant, and the wave at length comes on and breaks, murmuring the story of its life as it rolls up the silvery beach. It breaks in brilliant foam, and the stars sparkle on the thousand plumes that dance along its ridge, and plumes, and jewels, and all are swallowed up by the great tide of life that follows. Yet a few bubbles, bright and beautiful, float seaward over the next waves, and come again on shore with others. These are like memories of the departed, which last with us till one by one we follow them, bearing all such memories with us. Why don’t you listen, Phil?”

“I am listening, Joe; and I was thinking of this ocean, in which you and I are now so pleasantly floating side by side; and what waves sometimes lift us to the stars—waves of buoyant hope, and love, and wild ambition—and how, some stormy night in the uncertain years to be, a sudden wave, a blue, strong wave, will

take one of us shoreward, and leave the other floating alone. It will come suddenly, Joe. You will hear me shout. Mayhap amid the roar of the breakers I may not be heard distinctly, yet, my old friend, I will call aloud to you, and the thunder of the surf will not wholly overpower the last words of my love for you."

"I can not mistake that voice. It must be my old friend, Mr. Phillips."

I started from my position at this interruption, and saw standing near me the unknown lady of the Kur-saal. Still unknown. I could not, for my life, have recalled that face, beautiful as it was. "I see you do not know me," continued the lady, "yet I remembered you three hours ago. Shall I need to remind you of the Highlands, or have you forgotten them? Of the Fawn's Leap, or have you so long been absent from it that you have even forgotten Ellen's Glen?"

"Ellen B——!"

"The same—only my name changed when I was married. Allow me to introduce my husband, Mr. S——."

"I bowed as politely as possible to the husband of one of that little company, now widely scattered, that made glad our schoolboy days on the Hudson, and straightway commenced a conversation in which all the past was recalled. We remained on the beach half an hour, when she bade us good-night.

"I must return. Mr. S—— is not well, and we have but walked out to breathe the cool air after the confinement of the evening. You will call on me in the morning?"

I readily promised this, and Joe and myself resumed our places on the sand. A long silence ensued, broken at length by myself.

"Joe, I loved a man once whose life was like that wave you were speaking of a while ago, only it was all dark, save that once for an instant a star gleamed on a breaking crest, and oh, how holily! And that wave is somewhere rolling yet in this great ocean of life, and I am sure no gleam ever gladdens it. That lady had a brother. You heard her say she did not know where he was. Nor do I. Years have passed since he was in America.

"He was born near our old home, and grew to manhood by my side. You knew him well, but I see you have forgotten the family. Did you not recognize Ellen?"

"Is it possible? Ellen B——? I am surprised. I did not hear her name when you were speaking. Well, go on. What became of Frank? I never heard of his fate after I left school."

I continued my story. "He loved——"

"And was disappointed, of course, as a thousand have been," interrupted Joe, with a sudden sneer.

"Yes, my cynical Joe, he was disappointed; and when he thought to have held her to his heart, another embrace was around her—she slept on another's breast. She was not the first whom death has won from the embrace of affection."

"Ah! she died, did she? Better for her that she did. Her love would some day have proved her agony."

"Joe, you are in a queer humor to-night. You are not often so much of an old bachelor. What has come over you?"

"Nothing, nothing; go on with your history of Frank."

"I have no history to tell you. You know how devoted he was to study. He loved nothing but books for years, until, one summer morning, a fairy startled him, as he lay on the bank of the creek, with an open volume of Plato by his side. He looked up, and was lost! He tried to read on, but found that every letter was a blue eye, and every page a mystery of beauty which he had never before dreamed of, and he walked home to astonish his sister by asking her who a lady was that had passed him on the bank that morning.

"Thenceforward there was a rival in his head to his books, and at length she had the victory complete. And well she might. She was as beautiful as a dream—sweet sixteen, blue-eyed, and very small. Frank was tall, you remember. She was uncommonly slight in form, and he could easily lift her with one hand from the ground. But she had a big heart, and loved her noble lover with a woman's soul. Sneer as you will, Joe—"

"I did not sneer. There is love such as you dream of in the world, but not much."

"Right there; not much. Thank God for what little there is! It was a beautiful thing to see how trustingly she leaned on his arm, and looked up into his fine dark eye. She feared him at first, he was so far, she

thought, above her; but when she found he bowed to love her, and throned her above his own high heart, then she poured out on him all the treasures of a woman's perfect love.

"I saw them one night together as I passed through the Glen. Frank was seated on a rock, and Carrie's arm was around his neck as she stood by him. The moon looked quietly down on them, and didn't blush at all when she pushed back the dark hair from his forehead and kissed it. I think mayhap the moon is used to such sights. I passed on silently that night, not interrupting them. The next day Frank left for Europe, and never saw Carrie again.

"The wave of his life was mighty now, and a holy star was beaming on it, and a crest of pure snowy foam broke on its breast, and sank into the wave, and the wave rolled on, but the star-beam was there no longer.

"That passionless embrace of the grave had won her when he returned: the embrace of which no man is jealous—from which no love can win the loving! How sweet, how deep is the slumber of the beautiful! Never did the earth reclaim a lovelier form of clay.

"She slept as a child might sleep, dreaming of all beautiful things. 'See, mother,' said she, 'the moonlight creeping over the carpet. I shall live till it touches my forehead, and then die.'

"And so she died. The sad moonlight kissed her dear lips, and they thenceforward returned no caress of earth. Frank is a wanderer. His sister had worshipped him. She mourned long for him. She buried fa-

ther, mother, all she loved but Frank, and he has left her. Her life was bitterness for years. I do not know when she married.

“Come, Joe, let us go up to the house.”

XII.

Che Cabin.

Owl Creek Cabin, September, 18—.

IT gives me no slight pleasure to welcome you again to my cabin. It is scarcely more than two months since I was last here, but I seem to have been a wanderer for a long time, and can not convince myself that it was so few weeks since that we carried home the trout of our last day's catching.

I am disposed to congratulate myself on having passed an uncommonly pleasant summer; but having, as usual, wearied myself quite down with travel and labor, and feeling the approach of the old fits of solitariness, which, you know, once in a while overpower me, I gathered together a collection of necessaries of life, adding as large a supply of the luxuries as I could pack in a carriable form, and one of those bright mornings, two weeks ago, left New York and am here. You have before heard the route. This time I varied it only in meeting Black at the river, and so avoided the labor of carrying my pack up to the cabin. The canoe held us comfortably, and my little baggage, to which, however, were added some packages for Black.

My intention is to remain here until the winter drives me out; therefore I came prepared for a lonely

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sort of a time, but am delighted to know, to-day, that Joe will be here to-morrow. I found a letter lying on the rock by the river side. It was doubtless left there by Smith, whose canoe passed up before daybreak this morning—at least he told me, when I saw him at the bridge, that he should go up last night.

Black has made some important changes in the cabin, agreeably to my suggestions last Spring. We have a new chimney, broader and deeper than the old one : that was a stack chimney, made of pine-wood strips carefully covered with mud ; this is well made of stone, and covers the whole end of the cabin, gradually diminishing in size toward the roof ; yet the stars look pleasantly down on us through it as we sit by the fire on the hearth-stone. This hearth-stone is an addition of this summer. Black found it on the river side, and managed to float it down and get it in here. It is very smooth and large. The roof has been thoroughly repaired, and the whole cabin overhauled, and every chink stopped up with clay. In the furniture I find the largest improvement. I gave Black an order for a few luxurious matters in the way of rugs and cushions. I determined to abolish the outlandish and uncomfortable invention of chairs and stools. If you come here now, you will have the pleasure of lounging at your leisure on a bearskin or a rug, whichever you may prefer ; and if you do not approve of my change, then we shall differ. I'll find one of the old wooden stools for you, and you may use that, while I, at my ease on these magnificent bearskins, laugh at all thought of

care, or trouble, or fatigue, lazily dropping the ashes from my cigar on Nora's nose, to tease her. Good dog! She never showed her teeth at me, and she has often showed them for me. I have planned a monument for you, my old friend, when your hunting days are over, and I have determined to be pedantic enough to quote Homer on the tablet—that is, if I outlive you. Who knows which will go first from the forest and the cabin?

You should have seen the good dog leap on me the other day, when I took my rifle down from the antlers, on which it has hung since July intact. The dog knows it is never touched by me except to be brought out here, and she took every method to tell me she knew where I was going.

But I was speaking of the improvement in and about the cabin. The old oak overhead has been trimmed. I do not see a limb now which appears likely to fall in the winter gales. I have very serious ideas of recommending to Black to send an advertisement to some papers in the cities of a new hotel opened on the banks of Owl Creek and the —— River. I've no doubt it would *draw*. But he must warn those who wish single rooms not to come, for there isn't so much as a garret or loft. The cabin is but one room. I believe I never told you of its internal arrangements. They are very simple. The chimney occupies one end entirely. The opposite end is hung from peak to floor with the skins of various animals, interspersed with wings and brilliant feathers of birds. In front is the door and one small window. On the opposite side are

two windows, each about as large as a good-sized pane of glass—say one of the panes in your parlor windows.

In the corner, between the door and chimney, stands a table, rough-hewn indeed, but convenient, on which our eatables are usually prepared for the fire. The corner directly opposite belongs to me, and is always occupied by my bearskins. That corner I have filled for many successive autumns with a regularity that entitles me to claim my location. Across the cabin, from side-wall to side-wall, extend four poles. The side-walls are higher than usual in log houses of this size, being about eight feet from the floor. On these poles hang many of the utensils of daily life—not a few giant bucks' horns, some bears' claws, and a variety of trophies, from squirrels' tails to fox brushes and wolf scalps. In the farther end of the room is a pile of rugs, carpet, skins, and blankets, on which, at this moment, Black is lying, looking at me, and expressing again and again his pleasure at my presence.

I am lying at full length, writing. My folio lies on my bearskin, and I write with more ease than you who are accustomed only to the table and desk would imagine possible. I am half—Hark! A long shout at a distance. Black throws open the door. The shout is repeated. Two sharp, quick yelps from Nora! The dog recognizes Joe before we do.

Later.—That shout was meant to call us to the forest, and, seizing our rifles, we followed the sound. Imagine our surprise, on leaving the cover on the bank of the river, at seeing Joe on the opposite side, crouch-

ing behind a fallen tree. The instant he saw us, he beckoned us to lie down and keep Nora quiet. We did so in surprise, wondering meanwhile what brought him a day before his time, and what game was up now. The next instant our last doubt was solved, for we saw a splendid buck coming down the hill. There were two dogs at his heels, and it was a close run. The hounds did not speak—all the better for that. The buck doubled once on the hill, and went nearly to the top, then wheeled and came down nobly to the water. It was a breakneck affair to come down that steep hill side in that sort of way, and yet he touched the ground as lightly at each bound as if he were on the plain bottom land. There was no appearance of exertion whatever. He sprang over fallen timber, and rocks, and brush with the ease of a bird; nor, had you not known the peculiar position in which a buck holds his head if hard pushed, would you have imagined him chased. He took to the water a hundred yards above us, and at first struck bravely across. Something on the opposite side turned him, and he swam directly down stream. The dogs followed along the side of the water, but he kept coolly down the middle, until he caught sight of the cap I had incautiously lifted above the tree which concealed me. He seemed instantly to determine on the desperate chance of a charge on the dogs, and so wheeled to shore, taking a direct line for Joe's place of concealment. I saw Joe lying on his side carelessly, and imagined instantly that he had not seen the last move of the game; so I called his attention by the usu-

al signal. At the first hoot of an owl he looked across, at the second he seized his rifle, and at the third was on his knee looking over the tree; at this instant the buck touched bottom, and, with long and leisurely leaps, was approaching the shore. The dogs, two broad-breasted, noble fellows, stood side by side, as quietly and calmly looking on as if no game were up. This imperturbable, undisturbed look, the total absence of all care or anxiety, is a grand feature in a dog, indicating great bottom. You would not have supposed, had you seen those dogs and not seen the deer, that it was possible for them to stand the mad charge of an angry buck. They would breathe thus coolly until the instant he was on them, and then, with lightning-like suddenness, avoid his pointed antlers, and seize him by the throat or on the shoulder, and drag him down.

But they had no opportunity. The buck was within a few yards of them when he dropped his head for the charge. If you had not seen this occurrence, you could not imagine the fury, both in appearance and in action, of the angry game. Every hair on his body seems to turn forward. The ridge of the back is covered with stiff bristling hair, and the deer looks more like a hyena than an animal of his own species.

The buck fixed his eye on the dogs. I was too far off to see it, but it must have sparkled with rage. It is a very false idea that a black eye can express anger better than a light one. Save me from the flashes of a blue eye! It is difficult to drive out the love-light from an eye of heaven's own color, and bring in there

the fiery light of hatred or rage. But when you have succeeded in doing it, my advice is to keep away from the reach of those same eyes and the hands that they guide. The same is true of women and of deer.

I never saw an eye in living being, human or brute, that bore any comparison in beauty with the blue eye of a deer; and the light which flashes from it in rage is not at all comfortable. It scares one. I once stood a charge from a mad deer behind a tree. I had time enough to examine that eye, and don't care to see another such one.

He was about three rods from shore. The water was shallow there, and he hardly wet his feet. With horns leveled and dilated nostrils, he made one long leap, touched lightly in the water, as if on the surface, barely disturbing the glassy mirror, sprang again into the air, and—crack! He came down on his feet, staggered forward, leaped up, and fell on the water's edge. The dogs had him before he fell, and I could see Joe push away the nose of one of them to draw his knife across the throat of his game.

In a few moments some men came down to the water, and claimed ownership of the dogs. We could see a parley ensuing, and at length Joe called to us to ask the condition of our larder. We replied that it was full, but we had no objection to a roasting-piece; so we pushed across in the small canoe, and I grasped Joe's hand right gladly on the bank. His debüt on the river may be reckoned as promising well for the fall sport. Certainly I never saw a cooler or a better shot, and the

quiet enjoyment which he displayed in the affair indicates no lack of willingness to hunt. You are doubtless scolding all this time for our killing a buck in September, and I confess to a dislike to own the fact myself; not because I think it wrong, but because others do. After the first frosts on the ground, I esteem venison as growing poorer and poorer. The finest is to be had just at this season—perhaps a week or a fortnight hence will be better. We do not intend to shoot more than enough for our immediate wants until later.

XIII.

A SHIRT FRONT.

Owl Creek Cabin, October, 18—.

Fainter and fainter, now half inaudible, now wholly lost in the distance, and quite gone. Again, for an instant, I hear them, as they go up some ravine or cross the brow of a hill—and now all is still again. It must be five miles from here, I think, yet I can still catch, at times, the cry of the chase, and fancy that Nora's voice is more distinct than the other dogs'. They opened on the hill side, close to the cabin, and have continued, without interruption, for an hour, doubling frequently, and approaching me, but now they have been steadily receding, and must have crossed the east hills. It would not be surprising if the deer were shot on the Willahanna. I am not out to-day, for the reason that I hurt my foot in the last hunt, and am unable to walk without pain. It was a foolish affair too. I sprang from a rock into the top of a sapling, thinking thereby to shorten my way down the mountain. It is a common custom with us, but this time I did not look before I leaped, and so found my sapling was a brittle one, and I shortened my way with a vengeance ; for it broke off after bending half way down, and, instead of lowering me gently to the ground, I fell about fifteen

feet into a cedar bush, and rolled from that into a pile of stones, and picked myself up with a sore knee, and a half-sprained ankle, and a scratched face, and numerous other disasters, among which may be reckoned a twist of my foot, which is the only bruise that is not well. I don't exactly know the anatomy of feet, but I have a fancy that I have injured the cartilage between two of the bones, and may be laid up for a while. My foot is laid up—on a cushion, while I lie down on my bearskin, and thus you perceive why it is that I am *solus* in the cabin, while Black, and Joe, and Nora are on the hills. I have been whiling away an hour with reading over the last letters received by package from the city. You can hardly imagine the zest which a letter has when received here. It is like wine to a thirsty man; and one reads and re-reads letters, until they are as familiar as nursery songs. This, by-the-way, is only true of a few out of many letters, and it must be confessed that that last package contained much in the way of trash, that affords no amusement.

Shall I tell you what I thought as I was rolling down the hill side day before yesterday? Oddly enough, I was at that instant imagining the gay crowd that must be in attendance at the Fair at Castle Garden, and half wishing I could look in on those pretty faces. There are always pretty faces to be seen there, for the reason that country ladies are then so plenty in the city. As I was fancying that crowd, and imagining my whiskers turned inquisitively to some red-lined bonnet and houri face (you see I have not outgrown follies, old as I am),

I suddenly found my feet elevated above my head, and my whiskers sadly tortured by that villainous cedar bush. Think of it! It was four o'clock precisely in the afternoon, for my watch was stopped by the fall, and at that instant you were lifting your first spoonful of soup to your lips, and glancing across the table at your *vis-a-vis*; or, if you had sacrificed dinner to pleasure, you were pointing out a delicate rose-bud or dahlia in the gallery to the notice of our enchanting friend, Miss ——! Did not a shudder of some sort pass through you? Imagine your friend's position at that instant — his plaid hunting-jacket sadly displaced, his legs thrust far through his brown pants, exhibiting the soles of his shoes to the sunshine and the sky, his venerable head quite lost in cedar! Then, as you laid your gloved finger on the faultless arm of your lovely companion, or (supposing you at dinner) as you laid down your spoon, and smiled a bow (or bowed a smile) to your neighbor, and called John to hand you the salt (which delinquency on your part John reported to the cook, who is henceforth your enemy! How dare you ask for more salt in your soup?), at that next instant, imagine the velocity with which your friend's feet and head were alternating in position, up, down, up, down, as the gymnastic professors used to say; and paint, if you can, his exceeding astonishment of countenance at finding himself at length, wrong side up, in a heap of alatestone and stumps. Ah! it was shockingly rude, that perfect *nonchalance* of yours there in New York, while I was in such a fix out here.

Well, well, who knows what's going on in the world at this instant? How can I tell but you are in some "peculiar position," while I lie at my ease on 'my bearskin?' Who can tell me the present occupations of those I love? How know I but you, dear ——, may be sick, sad, weary, dead, at this instant that I so laughingly am recounting to you my mishap? I told you, when I saw you last, that Joe and myself had subscribed a dozen skins each toward a magnetic telegraph out here; but the stock doesn't sell well, and no other subscriptions are on the paper.

By-the-way, I shot a wolf once from the very rock from which I jumped so carelessly. It was long ago, when wolves were more plenty than they are now in this neighborhood. Of late years they are scarce, but in my early hunting days I used to meet them frequently. I was coming home at evening, one fall day, with no game, and, as you may suppose, I was somewhat inclined to be cross. As I passed the side of the hill, I heard a short bark very like the yelp of a dog over his food, and, looking round, saw a wolf on the rock, dragging along the fore quarters of a deer I had shot the day previous. You know that we usually leave the fore quarters in the woods.

I did not stop to ask the chances of a fight between the wolf and myself, but sent a bullet up the rock without any delay whatever. My habit in shooting is to depend on the first sight I catch of any game. I never hold a rifle at my shoulder more than the instant employed in pulling the trigger, unless the game is running

through dense cover, and seldom then. I shot with even unusual quickness, and the scoundrel dropped his game, looked snarlingly down toward me with a very ugly expression of face, lifted his right paw, and set it down again, seemed to be trying his strength, and then to conclude that he had none, and thereupon lay down on the very edge of the rock, and rolled off, bringing up (very much as I did) against a stump close by my side. You should have seen me go up the nearest tree. I was among the branches before the wolf could have turned over, had he been wide awake; but he was dead as a stone. I didn't know, of course, how much life there was in him, and hence my quick retreat. I loaded my rifle (I carried only a single barrel then) in the tree before I came down, but a better shot never was made. I had made a hole through him, and let out enough blood to take life with it. I took his hide off in a twinkling, and his scalp is the highest one yonder on the end of the cabin. I wish Joe would come. I'm getting lonesome here, and am satisfied I know every piece of bark in the covering of this cabin; I've been lying on my back studying their separate looks all the morning, and, as you may well suppose, I am getting uneasy. I am hungry withal, and don't suppose there's a crust in the larder. By-the-way, there was a light fall of snow here about a week ago, in the night, and we had capital sport shooting at rabbits. Just as day was breaking, I woke, and, while standing in the door of the cabin, saw a little fellow coming with leisurely jumps out of the cover, at nearly or quite thirty rods

distance. I could not at first tell what it was, but at length, as he came within about seventy-five yards, I sent a bullet after him, and he was on the breakfast table an hour afterward. My rifle, of course, woke Joe, and within ten minutes we shot six of them from the same position. The last one was nearer than the others when Joe prepared to shoot, and, at the instant he raised his rifle, I gave a short, loud whistle. The rabbit sprang six feet, and I took it for granted that Joe couldn't shoot; but the ball and the rabbit seemed to meet on the ground, for he shot at the instant he struck, and hit him. Joe is undoubtedly a splendid shot; few equal, and none surpass him. You may rest assured that two thirds of the stories you read about rifle-shooting are "gammon," to use Black's phrase; and common sense should tell every one so. I am a poor enough shot myself, but I have seen probably as good rifle-shooting as the country can show, and I never saw a man who could kill birds flying with any sort of accuracy, unless the birds are very large. I have seen it done, indeed, and have done it myself. I blew a woodcock to pieces with a rifle ball some time ago. He rose from a swamp which I was crossing after a fox, and I shot, as usual, without an instant's thought. There was no skill in it, for I might shoot at fifty, and miss forty-nine, and doubtless should. It may be regarded as a common sense fact, that no man has sufficiently fine sense of sight to distinguish, within half an inch, the centre of a mark at two hundred yards. Killing small game, snuffing candles, cutting off turkeys' heads, and

all that sort of thing, is very good shooting; and the man that can hit a shilling at two hundred yards twice out of three times successively, may be reckoned an extraordinary shot.

Joe, I have said, is a good shot. He ranks with me as the best shot I have ever seen. As an instance of it, I may refer to that rabbit; and a still better instance is given in his shots last Tuesday afternoon, for no one shot is a specimen of any man's shooting. He was standing on the bank of the river, just before sunset, and a large buck came down to the water on the opposite side. "It is too bad to shoot such a noble fellow when he has no chance whatever," said my friend, and thereupon he placed his hand on his lips, and gave that piercing yell which rings through the forest like the cry of fiends. The deer bounded into the air, and, as we had supposed he would, finding the cover too thick behind him, ran down the river about seventy yards, and then leaped a fallen tree with a gallant leap. At that point Joe shot, and he fell on the pebbly shore with the ball through his body. He was not quite dead, and while I was getting the canoe ready to cross, I heard Joe saying, "It's too bad to see the poor fellow struggling so. I meant to kill him dead. Well, here goes for it, and if this doesn't relieve him, I'll wait for the knife. Philip, shall I kill him quicker by a ball in the head, or where?" The buck was lying with his fore legs out before him and his head up, trying to raise himself. "Try his head and heart both, Joe." My remark was followed by two discharges of his rifle in quick suc-

cession. At the first the deer sprang quite up on his feet, and at the second fell dead. I found that he had a ball through his breast and heart, directed with excellent judgment: this was the first; the second had entered the skull behind the eye. The distance across the water could not have been less than a hundred and twenty-five yards. Here come Joe and Black, and I shall have some dinner. I don't know how long this may lie in my folio before it will reach you, for we have no idea of sending down again this month.

XIV.

The Willahanna.

Owl Creek Cabin, November, 18—.

WE left the cabin at daylight, and intended to have reached the bank of the Willahanna that same night, but the day's adventures prevented it, for we were led to follow a track which we found in a swampy place, hoping to get sight of the bear whose enormous footprint it was. As usual in bear-chases, it proved a long day's work, with no result except the catching of a fawn, which had fallen into a pit from which it could not leap. We were, of course, forced to let it go, and yet it would not leave us, but followed for half an hour through the woods, until it grew weary, and we left it. Night found us still some miles to northward of the lake, and we looked about for a place to lay our weary bodies.

At length we found on a hill side a sort of cave, into which the leaves of autumn that had fallen already were driven by the winds, and formed a bed quite soft enough for us. So, stretching ourselves out on them to try them, we discussed a plan for the night, which was immediately put into execution.

Kindling a fire, we piled on it large logs to burn slowly, and taking some pine knots which Willis had in his

pocket, we found a large flat stone, on which we placed them, and, setting fire to them, carried them into the forest some hundred yards from our cave. Placing them on the ground in an open space among the trees, we retired some twenty paces, and lay on the ground, each by a fallen tree, Willis on one side of the fire, and myself on the opposite.

And now the scene in the forest was beautiful indeed—beautiful or grand, I scarcely know which to call it. The trees were lofty, and their huge trunks were bare of limbs for forty or fifty feet from the ground. The bark on which the firelight gleamed seemed to be the rough skin of some huge monsters, while those trees that lay on the ground, stretching away into the gloom, appeared to be great serpents sleeping on the grass. But the branches assumed the most beautiful appearance, for the rays of light danced among the leaves, and met the moonlight as it struggled down through the dense covering; and to us, looking up from our positions, it was as if a mimic scene had been gotten up for our amusement, of heaven struggling with earth, and striving with its purity to conquer earth's passion. As too often, earth prevailed over heaven, and the firelight went up into the air, and we could see the smoke, faintly lit with red rays, floating away in the moonlight. Nor was the scene all that went to make up the attraction of the position we had taken. The sounds of the lonely forest are always full of melody. The low hum of the insect that fills one's ear in the cleared lands, the chirp of the cricket or the katydid, is not to be heard

here. But in the midst of solemn and soul-soothing silence, a voice will fall with indescribable sweetness on the ear of the forest sleeper, as the wind woos the topmost branches of the trees, and they try to embrace him in their swaying arms. Then he whispers to them in that low, earnest tone, that is the especial language of love, and as I lay and heard them holding that whispered converse, I remembered the days when I first learned to use that voice—the days of old! And I remembered one that passed in the springtime of her life unto the land where spring is alway. Anon the wind spoke louder, and then hushed into a deep calm, from which he did not rouse himself again till midnight. In the midst of this stillness, we heard the fall of a dried branch from a lofty tree. It was a mournful sound, followed on the next instant by what I supposed at first to be, in very truth, the hoot of the gray owl, but at the next instant knew as Willis's call to look out for game. This sound of the owl it is always safe to use, as it never frightens game, and it is therefore the most common signal among woodsmen. I did not move, but opened my ears somewhat wider, and heard the cracking of a dry twig over beyond Willis. Turning my eyes in that direction, still motionless myself, I watched the dense gloom in the forest for some moments, when I heard a sudden bound of a deer, and the next instant saw him dash through a moonlit opening about a hundred yards to the westward. He had not seen us, but was making a circuit of the fire. This was rather an odd and inexplicable movement, as the deer usually

moves slowly at night, and approaches a firelight as if fascinated.

Keeping my eye on him as well as I was able, and endeavoring to cover him with my rifle, I followed him half around the fire, and, as he passed through another opening I had him, and shot. At the very instant I shot, Joe's rifle cracked ; both balls struck him, and he fell. My knife, drawn swiftly across his throat, finished him, and in half an hour a choice piece was broiling on the coals of our fire in front of the cave.

I have spoken of *the cave*. It was nothing more than a shelf of rock, which projected ten or twelve feet over a flat table of some thirty by twenty feet. On this latter had fallen many large rocks, and two of these lay in such a way as to form sides to the room under the shelf, and in some measure protect us from the night air, which was not very warm. Drawing the fire as close to the opening in front as we could, and throwing on large logs, which we collected without difficulty, and piling up half a cord to be used in the night, should we wake, we were soon sleeping a sound sleep and dreaming. I dreamed of the surf-roar, and of voices mingling with it, and of merry times in the summer past, of Saratoga, of Ballston, of chowders, and of the hunt : all went mixed up in strange confusion through my brain, and I awoke at sunrise with a start, and wondered at finding myself where I was.

We breakfasted with Smith on the shore of the lake, about a mile from the outlet, and found Black there with Nora, as per agreement. After breakfast the

dogs were put out, and in an hour brought two deer into the lake at more than a mile from any of us. Canoes were plenty, however, and we dashed in pursuit over the water. The scene which ensued was exciting. The deer swam side by side, and were apparently endeavoring to cross at the widest part. I was nearer to them than any of the rest at the start, but Joe had a lighter canoe, and overtook me. Leaving my own to take care of itself, I jumped into his, and both together made the little thing fly over the water. We headed the game at half a mile from the shore, and Black and Smith, who, in their canoes, were not a hundred yards behind us, took one, while we took the other. I dropped my paddle, and Joe sent the boat alongside of the gallant fellow, who was making noble efforts for his life. Leaning over carefully (you may imagine the danger of the attempt, the fair chance for a cool bath at the least), I seized him by the antlers, and braced myself lest he should overturn us all. The moment that I touched him he ceased to struggle, and resigned himself apparently to his fate. But as Joe advanced from his end of the canoe to assist me, the stout buck threw his fore feet into the air and plunged with great force. Keeping the canoe straight as well as I was able, and holding him fast, I struggled with him till I got a fair opportunity, and then wrenched his head suddenly backward and upward. Joe's sharp knife slid across his throat, and I let go my hold, and, seizing a paddle, pushed away some feet from him. The water was red with his blood in an instant, and,

after a few plunges, he turned over, and his head went down. It was an easy matter to lift him into the canoe, and turn to see what Smith and Black were about. They were trying to take their deer alive, and, after half an hour's battle, gave it up entirely and killed him.

They returned to Smith's cabin, while Joe and myself paddled down to the outlet, and made our bow to the fair lady whom you, perhaps, remember I once spoke of.

XV.

Pike Fishing.

Bank of the Willahanna, February, 18—.

I HAVE passed the winter here and there, and, after a short stay in the city, I accepted an urgent invitation from a friend to accompany him to the Willahanna, where I now date this letter. I trust it will reach you, but it may not, inasmuch as the snow is deeper than you ever dreamed of snow in New York, and the thermometer is farther below zero than you would believe if I should tell you.

I remained a short time in the city, I say, but long enough to see many of its scenes, pleasant as well as sad. I joined a merry party, one evening, of young, light-hearted friends. I was charged with the care of two of these, to take safely and return safely to their homes. It was a clear, calm night, and bitterly cold. We paused a moment on our way, and I left the ladies while I attended to an item of business. After completing this, I was surprised by a man coming toward me on the side-walk, as I stood with my foot on the step, and saying, "Mr. Phillips, will you please to walk in here a moment?" His manner and appearance struck me, and I followed him. He led me into a low drinking-shop, where in the middle of the floor lay a

man apparently dead. I never saw a more horrible sight, and I have seen death in many forms. Blood covered every thing—the floor, the hands of those around, the body of the wounded man. I waited only long enough to see that he had the best of surgical attendance, and left him ; but he would not leave me. I sat on the seat, as we drove on, facing my two lovely companions, but could not fix my eyes even on their faces. That horrible visage was before me, with its blood, and the look of agony that was on it haunted me. The merry laughter of the gay, the dance, the song, the voices, and the melodies of the young, the sunny-eyed, the free-hearted, sufficed not to drive away that hideous spectre. And I went home and slept, and dreamed of it in sleep. So directly are the different scenes of life and death in juxtaposition here in this great metropolis! I grow weary of the incessant, startling varieties of life. I pass the crowded street, and see a hearse making its way slowly through dense masses of stages, and carriages, and carts. Here it is quite stopped by the heavy truck that is carrying the rocks that are to build a perishable monument—scarcely less perishable than the clay which waits its passing. Now it hesitates, and turns aside for a carriage from which the wild laugh of merriment falls on the unconscious ears of the dead. And anon a child, clapping its tiny hands and shouting gayly, calls his mother to see the velvet pall and strangely-clad horses, never heeding, never thinking that the little hands will lie nerveless under such a pall, and the mirth-loving lip be hushed to just such

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slumber. And I, thus thinking, pass on, forgetting not that my footsteps on that worn pavement make a melancholy echo among the confined sleepers in the vaults below, but treading no less heavily when I remember that they will not heed even the earthquake, so profound is their slumber. And even as I pass on, a friend overtakes me and tells me of the death of one I knew and loved, and whose passing clay I knew not but a moment before. And I grow sick of the city, and long to be away from it among other scenes; and so I accept any invitation that offers, and am away. *Ecce signum*, I am here.

The snow is deep, as I have said. Fortunately, the lake had not frozen over when the last snow fell. Fortunately, I say; for now the water is covered with glassy ice, firm and thick, which is decidedly advantageous to our purposes, namely, pike fishing. You will think it cold sport to catch fish at this season; but it is not so cold when the excitement is on, and when the fishing is good. Yesterday, it must be confessed, was cold in the forenoon. The fish would not bite, and we lacked the necessary excitement. But by the middle of the afternoon it became more enlivening, and the night was glorious.

Probably few have either tried or heard of the sport of pike fishing through the ice; and, although it is a method of taking them which requires no skill whatever, still it is one which I have enjoyed from the time I was old enough to handle a line; and although there is, beyond doubt, far more pleasure, and more reason

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for pleasure, in the skillful handling of a trout-rod, and the graceful management of a fly, still there is a decided gratification connected with the pulling up of five, ten, or twenty pounds of fish by main force. In the same way, I have enjoyed keenly the pleasure which a bear-hunt affords, and have entered into all the spirit and danger of such sport whenever opportunity offers, but have none the less enjoyed the excitement of shooting gray squirrels with a shot-gun. There's excitement in the latter which I never saw surpassed in the former; and I verily believe I have run faster, and loaded quicker, and shouted louder, and made myself hoarser in the squirrel-hunt than in the bear-hunt.

But to the pike fishing. We put on our skates, after a capital breakfast at the house of our worthy friend, Mr. —, and started out to explore the lake. It is an exhilarating sensation to me, that of being on skates. I always feel as if flying, and never enjoy a conversation more than when gliding by the side of a friend over the smooth ice.

In an hour we made the circuit of the larger portion of the lake (you will remember I once told you it was shaped somewhat like a figure 8), and by this time our men had made preparations for fishing. These consisted in procuring a quantity of small fish for bait, cutting large holes in the ice, and planting firmly by each hole a large bush. The holes were six or eight in number, and scattered along a quarter of a mile's distance. Each line was fastened to a bush, and baited with a fish, and thrown into a hole—a line, of course, at each



hole. We waited an hour for the first bite, and then the farthest bush from us was the one which was bent down. In an instant we were away for it, helter skelter, and, as I first reached it, I seized the line, and drew out a miserable-looking fish, weighing less than a pound. The pike bites voraciously, always hooking itself. Half an hour passed, and the bush nearest to my friend P—— was jerked violently. A moment later, he drew out a fine fellow, weighing about six pounds. As the day wore on, we went homeward for dinner, having taken scarcely twenty pounds of fish, all told. We had one (the second one which was taken) broiled, and he made a delicious portion of our meal, I assure you. Shall I give you our bill of fare? Listen, ye who sit down to tables loaded with the delicacies of your market, bought with money at an expense that would frighten our worthy host—listen to the bill of fare which the mountain land furnishes freely, for the asking, to the settler and his guests. *Imprimis*, there was our fish, which would have graced a golden dish, but would have been no sweeter from it than from the broad deep plate on which it lay. Then we had a roast of venison, that delicate morsel which is the *saddle proper*, and a stew of ditto, which was beyond all praise; a rabbit, cold; a bear-steak, carefully broiled by the fair hands of Joe's gentle friend. (Oh, Joe, you were not there, and we missed you!) There is but one cut of a bear that is fit for a civilized being to eat, and that must be cooked properly to be any thing but greasy and oily, and fit for no decent man's dog. I did not try

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this, but P—— said it was good, and is a judge. So much of meats. Add the delicious roast potatoes, white and mealy, the New England Sunday morning dish (you remember the dish of baked beans that has been all night in the oven?), and the never-to-be-forgotten ash-loaf (à la Block Island), and can you doubt an instant when I tell you that, after dinner, we were disposed to let the pike swim on unmolested?

P—— was discussing the comparative merits of my cigars and his own, and I, little heeding him, was given to my usual after-dinner meditations, when a man entered to tell us that the fish were biting fast. We doubted our capabilities for skating under the circumstances, but went down nevertheless, and, catching sight of the bushes, we were invigorated instantly. P——'s skates were first rigged, and he dashed at the farthest bush, which was by a larger hole than any other. I had risen to my feet, and was starting off, when P—— reached his bush; and, oh marvelous! he vanished wholly and instantly from my view. His impetus (momentum, we used to be told, was made up of *weight* and velocity, and P—— certainly weighs something, especially after such a dinner)—his impetus, I was saying, was too great, and he went, feet first, into the hole. Fortunately, he caught with his hands on the edge as he went down, and although his hold slipped, still he thus arrested himself, and came immediately up in the hole, and lifted himself out just as I reached him.

“How are they, P——? Did you say they'd bite

this afternoon? Been to see about the stock of fish on hand?"

P—— did not deign a reply, but coolly (as you may imagine) and imperturbably seized the line, and, soaked as he was, landed a magnificent fish. I say *landed*; perhaps I should say *iced*. At all events, P—— began to ice, and before he reached the house was incased in armor. He changed his clothes, and was down again within fifteen minutes, and we took a fine lot of fish before dark. When it began to be dusk, I fastened a newspaper to each bush, and built a fire by it, so that, after dark, we could still see them move. The pike, which usually sleep quietly at night, will be attracted by a fire, and we continued to take them until a late hour for supper. The sky was filled with watchers when we left the lake, and sat down to a cup of unadulterated Mocha, thanks to the same fair hand aforementioned. Ah! my dear Joseph, it would have done you good to hear the songs we heard last night!

XVI.

Annie Gray.

New York, April 3d, 18—.

I HAD been sitting half an hour before the grate, with my feet under Nora, who invariably lies across them if I place them on the rug, and I had been thinking more of a perplexing subject in the course of business than of any thing else, although, to say the truth, I had been doing as little thinking as was consistent with actual existence, for I was very tired, when the dog sprang to the door with a short yelp, and stood gazing up at the latch with a joyful expression on her very expressive countenance. The next instant I heard a familiar footfall on the stair, and Willis entered.

You will imagine the welcome he received when I tell you that I had seen him but once, and that but for a moment, since last fall.

He entered, dusty and travel-worn, yet with his usual joyous eye and ever-cheerful countenance. It was a question which of us three was gladdest, and when we discussed it we yielded the palm to Nora, who deserted my feet and stood for fifteen minutes in front of him, looking steadily in his face, as if she understood, quite as well as I, every word he uttered. In the midst of the story of his far wanderings, and the moving incidents which had brought him swiftly homeward, I was

obliged to leave him in possession of my room and fire, with Nora for entertainer, while I attended a business engagement, which detained me till nearly eleven o'clock.

I found him reading when I returned, and Nora was lying with her nose on her two paws outstretched before her, gazing into the fire. Then we talked! Do you know what it is to talk? It is not the use of the lips and tongue alone. I know that is the common idea, but it is a popular fallacy. True conversation is made up by eyes and smiles, and, above all, by hearts; and oftentimes, in perfect silence of the lips, two persons, looking in each other's faces, will converse, while the simplest utterance of the voice would dissolve a spell and close the communion. We talked till long after midnight, and principally of old times.

Among other memories, one came which, by your leave, I will speak of, not because I have any idea that it possesses any peculiar interest, for it does not, since it is a simple story of every-day life, but because I feel in a humor just now for writing it, and, to amuse myself, I propose to put it on paper; and if, after that, it appears worth sending to you, you shall have the reading of it.

It is of one whom I knew many years since, younger than I by several years, and as pure and gentle a girl as ever forgot earth for heaven; for long ere this she has forgotten earth.

She was a winsome girl. Never was one more so. Her home was in the opening of a gorge of the mount-

ain, where the ravine spreads out into a valley, not very wide, watered by the stream that dashed wildly over the rock a little farther up. The broad, low cottage of the widow Gray (as I will call her by your leave, although I need not say I use a fictitious name) was concealed from view in the daytime by a dense mass of trees and shrubbery, except on one side, where the lawn sloped down to the bank of the creek. Here were usually moored two or three light skiffs, which might easily be forced up the rapids, quite into the mountain gorge, and which were often seen bearing Annie and her brother down the current, returning from some expedition on the hills. Had you passed along the road which crossed the mouth of the ravine below the cottage, you would not have suspected that a house was in the thicket above you, unless it had been in the evening, and you saw the gleam of the light, or paused, as I have often paused, to let your horse drink at the edge of the broad creek, and then perhaps you might have heard a song floating out of the dark wood, and if you rode on till midnight it would linger in your ears, and you would fancy you had heard a spirit.

That man must have a hard heart that did not love Annie Gray. She was the impersonation of loveliness. I never could describe a face or form. I do not remember friends by their features, and I have not the remotest idea of the color of their eyes or hair in nine cases out of ten. But I do remember her with distinct memory. She was tall—that is, rather above the me-

dium height, and slender, but graceful, and beautifully shaped. Every motion was natural and unaffected, and her footstep was as light as her heart, and that had not a heaviness. Her eye was dark, quick as sunshine in its changes, and full of unspoken poetry. You might read all manner of beautiful fancies and holy thoughts there. But I linger too long on the description of her. Her brother was a fine fellow, a year or two older than she, and one of the merriest boys in all the country. He loved his sister too, and, as I have before remarked, love has a reflective force which makes the lover lovely.

I am completely lost in a whirlwind of memories now that I return to those days and scenes. There were a thousand incidents of my early life that are brought vividly before me the moment I recall the old cottage in the glen and its beloved inmates. How startlingly does the trite remark that "we live in a changing world" recur to our thoughts every day! In fact, it can not become trite. The very stars that we worship as changeless sometimes fall, and the eyes that we worship with more of devotion than the stars grow dim, and the hearts that we fancy immutable change mournfully! There is nothing immutable but God. It is the attribute of Deity, which includes all others, and to which mortals do homage because they can not comprehend it.

A score of years has removed that cottage from the face of the earth, and its inhabitants, having separated here, have met again up yonder! One by one, with

their lips murmuring hymns and prayers, and their white hands folded together, the friends of my younger days have passed away, and but few remain of all that company.

Annie Gray died thus. One glorious summer evening, when the moon was at its full, she and Ned had been strolling up the mountain side, and, coming down together, had nearly reached their boat as twilight gathered around them. Loth to return from the forest, she bade Ned push the little skiff almost under the fall, and standing on a rock in the very middle of the water, she shook her tiny fist at the cataract, and held a mock conversation with it.

Returning myself from a day's shooting on the mountains, I saw her on her pedestal before I was seen, and, throwing myself down on the ground, watched her with admiring eyes. Undine herself was not more beautiful. She talked to the water as to an old familiar friend; and, in truth, if there be sprites and ouphes, they must have loved her. Her voice was clearer than that of the stream, and when she laughed, as she at length did at some odd reply she imagined the fall to make, the old arches of the forest and the ravine gave back a musical echo, so that I started to my feet, and listened to it as to the voices of fairies indeed. But a cry of half terror and half laughter startled me, and, springing down the bank, I saw her for a single instant as she disappeared in the water. Her footing had proved insecure, and she slipped from the rock into the embrace of the stream she loved.

It was the work of an instant to spring out to her, and swim but a few strokes to the shore, and she was not a particle frightened by the occurrence ; on the contrary, the woods rang with her uncontrollable laughter as soon as she was on the shore.

I walked in that same forest two years ago, and heard again the music of that ringing laughter through the long halls of time, made scarcely more melodious by its passage through the corridors of years !

Placing her in the boat, and taking the oars from Ned, I soon delivered them safely at the cottage, and bade them good-night. The next day Annie had a raging fever, and was delirious for ten days. I saw her several times, but she did not recognize me, albeit I was a near relative, and had known her from her birth. There was one voice that she recognized, and one face that she looked up to with longing love. It was the face of Phil R——, who had won her pure young heart. But I will not intrude on the sacred memory of that love, which is the property of but few now living. Phil is dead too. On the tenth day of her sickness she slept heavily, and awoke in her right mind. But, alas for the dear ones around her ! it was but too evident she was near to heaven. Her eye was clear and full of joy, as if she had been, as I doubt not she had, with angels.

Old Mr. Winter, the clergyman who had baptized us all, and had buried our fathers, and had loved us faithfully from the days of our first lisping, stood by her bed, and she smiled joyfully as she saw him.

" Ah! Mr. Winter, I used to wonder whether I should die with you all around me, and this is just exactly as I wished it. It seems strange, too, that I am dying. I don't exactly believe it yet. Phil, am I dying?"

" God forbid, Annie."

" Ah! that tone, Phil! You mean to say God only can save me, for all hope of man is gone. Don't grieve, though, don't grieve. Why, it isn't hard to die. I love the dear earth well enough to stay here, and the flowers and birds, and the brook, and the old seat down on the bank of the stream; but I don't feel so very sorrowful to leave them as I used to think I would. And I love mother, and Ned, and Mr. Winter, and—and—and you, Phil!" and here her voice, which had been low but cheerful, suddenly trembled, and she was silent. At length she continued in a renewed tone of cheerfulness, " Phil, go sometimes and sit on the old seat down there by the stream, and put your arm along the back of it, and look up; and if you don't feel my kiss, it will be because angels' kisses can't be felt; for if God lets me, I'll come there, and take the seat which I have so often sat in, and lay my head on your shoulder. Mr. Winter, I'm going to heaven at last in advance of you. I started a long way behind, but I shall be there first, after all."

The good old man to whom the last part of her sentence was addressed sobbed aloud; but at length, recovering his composure, he knelt at the side of her bed, and his long white locks fell over the counterpane as he commenced a prayer of earnestness. I stood still at

the foot of the bed, and watched the face of our angel girl. As he spoke of heaven, her eye lighted, and as he begged God to spare her to us yet a little longer, I saw her gaze seek where Phil was kneeling, with his face buried in the pillow which lay at the side of the bed. Then I saw her hand steal along until it reached his head, and her tiny fingers were among his thick locks of hair, and the next moment her hand was in his, and he rose, and, sitting by her side, gazed into her face with unutterable love ; and as the sublime words of hope escaped from the lips of the clergyman, I saw hers move, as if to say, " Kiss me, Phil ;" and he stooped down to her, and, with her arm around his neck, and that last loving kiss upon her lips, she went forth by the unknown path that all must tread.

But she went not forth feebly nor alone. Strong in her simple faith, and leaning confidently on her Savior, she who was fairest of our children here has long ago become, I can not doubt, one of the fairest of God's children there.

Peace be with her ! On her grave violets bloom, and I have seen children who had wandered over the hills in search of flowers all day long in vain, refuse to pluck those which bloomed holily over all that was earthly of Annie Gray. Peace be with her ! In that sunny land, whereof I dream in summer Sabbath-morning dreams, I trust one day to meet her. There the voice that was low and plaintive as the night-wind here has renewed its tones in thrilling melody. There the last sound of sorrowful discord is hushed, for as she left us

those sounds died away, faintly, scarce heard, then gone forever! and she did not hear them when she came back, as she did at times, to keep the tryst with Phil. She heard then no sounds but the beatings of his heart.

One summer morning, ten years afterward, she called him suddenly, and his spirit sprang forth at the call. The bonds of earth were broken! None knew whereof he died.

I am growing old. Stout of heart and strong of limb as I yet am, I nevertheless have seen the moss on the monuments of those I loved, and the epitaphs of my "old familiar friends" are scarcely legible! And is it strange that I find it difficult to identify the boy, whose life was so full of free, light-hearted joyousness among the mountains, with the man who must suffer for this hour's swift writing for mere pleasure by close application during half the night to perplexing papers?

XVII.

A Family History.

New York, April 6th, 18—.

SOME time ago, I passed three years in a retired country village, where I knew no one personally out of the family in which I boarded.

What my reasons were for leading a life of such perfect calm as those three years proved themselves to be, it is not now necessary to say ; it is enough for the purposes of my story to say that I selected a village where I was wholly unknown, and that I never entered a house within its bounds during my term of retirement, except, as I before remarked, the one in which I resided.

Surrounded with books, and music, and paintings, and the luxuries of that sort which make the most quiet part of the earth to appear thronged with visitors, I was happy, if happiness is to be found on earth.

There were gossips in the village, who, as I afterward learned, ascribed my long stay to my devotion to one who was certainly worthy of all worship, and whose home, at a few miles' distance, was the abode of beauty and luxury. But they erred, and thereby hangs a tale that I have not now time or inclination to tell ; suffice it to say, my word is good ; and though my horse

did learn the long avenue well by day and by night, almost daily passing through it for years, nevertheless, he did not bear a lover to the wooing. If need be, you would add your word to this, dear ——; whose youngest son last night fell asleep on my lap while we talked of the good days of old.

I have said that I was surrounded with books, and in those I found my best companionship, except when I might have a gallop over the mountain with ——, whose grasp on her rein was fearless, and who sometimes, during the summer months, accepted my escort for a ride, or when I was a guest at her father's house, where, to say truth, I found myself quite often, and, I flattered myself, welcome.

One summer morning I was seated at my window, reading and looking out once in a while at the heavy foliage of the maple that shaded the house, when I was interrupted by the entrance of my servant, announcing a visitor.

The name was strange to me, and I looked up inquiringly at the gentleman, who caught me at rather an unseasonable hour in morning-gown and slippers. He was tall and pale, with a striking breadth of forehead, and, withal, having a keen, black eye, and a face that attracted your highest admiration. It was the face of a student and a thoughtful man, but now overhung with a deep melancholy. His voice trembled as he spoke, but became clear and very distinct, and I thought musical, as he continued:

“My name is W——, as you have heard, and it is

probably unknown to you. In my father's younger days, his father and your grandfather were devoted friends. They fought together in the Revolution, and were bound to each other by the strongest ties of intimacy. Our family residence is ten miles from here, but we have known of your residence, and long intended to renew the old acquaintance, if possible, through you, but no opportunity has presented. My father is now desirous of asking an obligation from you. My sister died yesterday. She will be buried to-morrow; will you attend her funeral as a bearer?"

I readily consented, and, declining his offer to send a carriage for me, rode across the country to Mr. W——'s place. It was a fine old mansion among the trees, and I had often passed near it without seeing it. The scene presented as I approached was novel and beautiful. In the grove before the house was gathered a large concourse of people, and I heard the voice of prayer going up to the sky through the branches of lordly trees. On approaching nearer, I saw the coffin standing on the long piazza, and an old servant at its head, watching the placid features of the sleeping daughter of the house.

In the twilight of that summer day, as the moon, just past its full, was rising in the east, and the evening star was looking peacefully down on us, we entered the burial-ground, and, removing the vault-stone, passed down the damp steps, and left the gentle girl to sleep with her mother and her noble fathers.

As I rode home over the hills that evening, I was in communion with the days of yore, and fancied that my

grandfather, whom I never knew, blessed me for the attention I had given to the remains of the descendant of one he loved. But in my room, and in the company of my books, I confess I forgot the past entirely, and a year had gone by before I was reminded of my friends, the W——s.

It was just such another summer morning, and I was seated almost exactly as before, when my servant again announced Mr. W——.

Starting up in some surprise, and, indeed, with not a little embarrassment, I was concocting some sort of apology for my neglect, when I saw, by that same melancholy countenance, that he desired none of the formalities of cold politeness. A sad smile passed over his finely-chiseled features as he spoke.

“I have come on a sad errand, Mr. Phillips, a second time. My only remaining sister died last night. Is it too much to ask your company again in our affliction?”

Again I rode across to the old mansion, and again the same scene was presented as before. I could have imagined the year rolled back, only there was one face missing that I had seen among the mourners. That face, that then was sad and tearful, now was smiling joyously, and they were weeping for her! Strange that we weep so for the blessed dead who smile on us in their repose! strange that we mourn for those that mourn no more!

There were eyes that had been dimmed by countless tears, and lips that had quivered with many agonies. The lids had fallen calmly over those eyes, and the

hush of peace was on those lips, yet all around were weeping as if hopelessly.

Is it not strange that men shudder so, and shrink from death, which is their only rest? Is it not marvellous that they do not make ready for the deep sleep with joyfulness?

The day was not yet gone as we left that fair sleeper by her sister. The red beams of the departing sun flooded the entrance to the vault, and one small but brilliant beam quite entered it. But, sunshine or darkness, it mattered not to the sleepers there.

Another year passed, and I was still in my village retirement. Another summer evening found me by the side of my friend, Miss ——, enjoying the twilight, as our reins lay loosely on the necks of our horses. Slowly sauntering down a hill, we met a rider who was moving as slowly as we, but who, on meeting us, reined up his black horse, and addressed me:

“Mr. Phillips?”

“That is my name.”

“Mine is ——. I was riding over to T—— to see you. Mr. James W—— died yesterday, and his father desired to have you present at his funeral.”

I went. The brother had sought his sisters. Again the vault-stone was removed, and the sunbeams again fell on the steps, and stole into the damp chamber where death had kept silent reign a year. Again our footfalls disturbed the peace of the vault, and again we closed it, and the world rolled on.

I remember that, while within the vault, I forgot the

progress of time. I seemed to be in the presence of the past as well as the future, and when I came out, appeared to re-enter the world after an absence from it.

The next week I left T——, and have never been there since that day. Letters from my friend, Miss ——, from time to time, informed me of the occurrences in the village and country around, of the gossip occasioned by my departure (which was as sudden as my advent), and frequently of items of news which interested me. In one letter was a passage like the following :

“ You remember that gentleman whom we met one evening while riding, who asked you to attend young Mr. W——’s funeral? He is dead. It now appears that he was engaged to the younger daughter. God grant he has met her.”

Another letter, a month afterward, contained this paragraph :

“ Old Mr. W—— sleeps with his children. I think he sleeps well, for his life has been wearisome, and he needed rest. The family, I am told, is extinct, except in the person of one son, who is a wanderer, no one knows where.”

Many years after the events which I have thus related, I met a gentleman who had returned from a tour in Europe. I related the story to him in the course of conversation, and he took a note-book from his pocket, and read me the following lines :

“ *Copy of an inscription found on a stone by the shore of the Mediterranean, near ——* : Edward W—— was

buried here by his fellow-sailors of the American brig —, May 4th, 18—."

"It was a rude stone and rudely carved," continued my informant, "but I thought it worth copying, for it was a strange place to find a countryman sleeping."

"So," thought I, "they may, perhaps, be together again!"

Dust to dust! I never have felt so forcibly at any other time the truth that we must return to the earth from which we sprang, as I have in reflecting on the history of that family.

And when I remember that old man in his desolation, how can I be lonely? Lonely! There is no such thing on earth, if we but look on things rightly.

Man treads a rugged path, but I thank God that there is a moral compensation (very like some of those physical ones which Paley talks of) which so provides that, however gigantic may be the strides man makes, he never ceases to hear the music of tiny footfalls at his side, keeping even pace with him, and which gives strength to those gentle ones who walk with us, to keep forever close beside us, up mountain sides or across holy plains, or in gloom, or in light, even to the very valley of the shadow of death. Nay, farther on! For if our love die with our clay, and be buried with our dust, wherefore, oh! wherefore made he us immortal? I rest in the perfect assurance that human love is so high, so strong, so heavenly, that over it Death has no triumph.

XVIII.

Blur Fish.

New York, November, 18—.

I TAKE advantage of a day of leisure (which leisure is taken by the doctor's directions, and not of my own inclination) to write for an hour or two. If my most excellent friend, the aforementioned guardian of my physical health, should enter before I have concluded my letter, I may not hope to finish it to-day, for he is as jealous of my writing as a lover of his mistress. In truth, he is right. My body is a very strong one, and my constitution has been iron, but it is wearing out somewhat with exposures ; and my mental labor, which has been of almost incredible severity and pain of late, has aided to shake my usually firm health.

I find myself growing peevish and discontented daily. Even this cup of nectar, the veritable Lachryma Christi, from the sunny hill-side of the Abbey of Christ's tear, this drop of golden wine, has a bitter taste, and I have not sufficient inclination to make it pleasant to drink it. Well, well ; I must content myself to grow old, even while in the strength of years. I have lived considerably *longer* than most men of my age (counting time in "*thoughts*, and not in figures on a dial"), and am content.

Really this chair is comfortable, and this fire deliciously warm, and the bunch of tuberose on the table is very fragrant, and the painting on the wall before me is the very painting of all in my collection, or in the world, I love most to look on ; for it is a Flora, with thy heavenly expression of eyes, my —— ; and, after all, now that I begin to be in better humor with the world and with myself, I find this tear-drop as pure as ever vintage of the sunny South was, and why should I not be content ? Well, I am so. Who could be otherwise ? And if it were not for an intimation I received this morning that I must be ready to-morrow to go on a journey, I should be without a care. One shivers at the very thought of those Pennsylvania mountains in November. Think of it ! And yet I must look at some thousand acres of land supposed to have an existence and location in the western part of Wayne county, in the Keystone State, and, *nolens volens*, I go.

I have the comfort of knowing that I may carry my rifle on my shoulder while looking, and if a stray buck crosses my path, I may even shoot him. We shall see. Meantime—that is, for this afternoon—I have but to make myself easy here. The curtains are drawn so as to mellow the light of the sun, which falls broad on the window, and my Flora blesses me in my eyes with her joyous smile. Is not a beautiful scene a blessing to the eyes ?

I have been strongly urged by some friends to sketch my experience in the various kinds of fishing which form the autumnal sport on our northern waters. I had

some hesitation in doing so, from this fact mainly, that my views of some things differ so much from the views of those who have written and published most on these sports, that I am rather disinclined to advance them, lest I seem impertinent. I am not a theoretical sportsman, but a very plain practical one, and in my day have had some experience too. I am somewhat noted among my friends as a lucky fisherman, and I say this for the sake of showing that, if not theoretical, I am apt to be, what is better, successful. Thus much by way of preface.

I know no sport which excels taking blue fish. The habits of this fish are singular. About forty years ago they disappeared entirely from our coast, and none were seen again until about the year 1838. The first fish which I took, shortly after that, were small, weighing scarcely a pound each. They have since increased in size and quantity annually, until it has become a serious question whether they will not drive all other fish from their feeding-grounds. They are very fierce and voracious, devouring all kinds of fish, and apparently never satisfied. I selected six fine fellows last summer from a lot I had taken. They weighed about eight pounds apiece, and on cleaning them I found in each of them more than three quarters of a pound, and in one more than a pound, of fragments of scups (porgies), and yet, stuffed and crammed as they were, they had been foolish enough to seize on my bone bait and hook themselves.

They are found along the coast from Maine to Vir-

ginia, but the large ones congregate in the open waters between Montauk and Nantucket. Stonington is the best port from which to sail for them, and not infrequently (as last summer) many of the largest are taken close to the breakwater, and, indeed, quite up in Wampassak Cove. I have seldom known large blue fish to be taken west or south of Montauk, or north or east of Nantucket. Those weighing four or five pounds are called large in all waters but these.

Of blue fish bait little need be said. They bite at any thing which moves rapidly through the water. Their principal food is the small and beautifully translucent bait fish, but they sometimes cut up schools of moss-bunkers and porgies, and destroy quantities of them. For eastern waters the bone bait is of course the best. I like the block tin well, but they are not long enough for large fish, and it is extremely difficult to unhook them without being injured by the teeth of the fish. I lost a piece from the end of my thumb thus. Long after a fish is on deck, if you point your finger at him he will jump at it like a dog. The tin is best at Shrewsbury; but at Stonington you will require a bone not less than six inches long (better seven), and the hook should have a curve two inches across, at the least. Small hooks are the cause of losing many fish. Let the bone be turned round and smooth, bored from end to end, the hook being made fast in at one end, and the line passed through. Let your line be very strong. You may strike a large bass, and if you are so fortunate, your line must be a stout one. I think many blue fish

lines and baits are carried away by large bass. Another advantage gained by a large line is, that your fingers are less cut. You must expect, however, to suffer in this way till your hands are hardened. The scars of old wounds are visible all over my fingers and hands.

The first blue fish which I took this summer were taken on a fine summer day, off Napatree, two miles from Stonington. Captain —— and myself were out in a small open boat carrying a spritsail. We had tried all the water, and passed Napatree twice, but had taken only half a dozen fish, when we saw a small boat standing off and on in a way which led us to suppose her crew had found a school of fish. We ran down and struck on them within jumping distance of the large rock. They were lying among the breakers; outside there were none. So we would run into the very edge of the surf, go about within two rods of the rocks, throw our lines into the breakers, and, coming out, invariably hook two fish; throw again, and hook two more; and come about again at a few rods' distance to repeat the same maneuver. The sport was exciting, for the day was fine, the surf heavy, and the roar deafening, and there was something very rousing and inspiring in the way of handling our little craft. It was rather close approximation to the rocks sometimes, when she didn't go about as swiftly as she should. I think we took fifty-one fish within three quarters of an hour.

The sport continued good during most of the summer and early part of the fall. I can not, however, omit relating the success of one day's expedition.

We had intended to pass some days on Block Island, and our plans were made for Monday morning, but, owing to the unexpected engagements of Captain ——, we had given up the idea. But Monday morning was so clear, and the wind so fresh from the southwest, that I walked out and met the gentlemen who were to compose the party, and by ten o'clock we had provisioned the boat, and were off at precisely half past ten from Bath House bridge. It was about ten o'clock when we ate lunch, and were discussing it still when we ran up close to the Light-house on Block Island. "Here goes," I exclaimed, "for the first fish," and threw over my line. It had not fairly gained way through the water behind the boat, when I hooked a fine fish and brought him in, followed closely by one on the line of Mr. A——. Five lines were over astern in a moment, and five fish in the boat as swiftly as they could be drawn in. From this moment the fish struck the baits the instant they fell into the water or gained way, but the lines became foul, and Mr. A—— proposed that two of us should leave. Accordingly, we threw our lines and baits into the small boat which lay on deck, and, lifting it over the side, sprang into it and drifted in shore.

We were now about forty rods to the southward of the north point of the island, and nearly abreast of the Light-house. The wind was fresh from the southwest, and the tide running strong flood, but we were in the eddy under the west side of the island. We stood up, and threw and hauled. It was difficult to keep our balance, the boat being small, and the sea running irreg-

ularly. It was especially difficult, when we had filled the bottom of the boat with fish, and were obliged to stand across her thwarts. We drifted in shore, and continued to take fish as rapidly as we could work our lines, casting not more than six fathoms, and hauling in instantly. I saw, almost invariably, from ten to twenty large fish following my hook, leaping over one another in their haste to be hooked. When we reached the outer edge of the breakers, we pulled out a few strokes of the oars and drifted again. Between the wind and tide, we went slowly to the northward, and at length went out by the bar. I never have seen such a quantity of blue fish as were in the water that day. Looking over the side of the boat, we could see thousands of them shooting through the water, and they would follow the fish that was hooked close up to the gunwale. Once, when I had hooked a large fellow, I lost my balance on a sudden lurch, and fell into the bottom of the boat, breaking my thumb nail below the quick in a way not a little painful. We filled our boat once, and made a signal for the large boat, which stood down to us, and relieved us of our cargo. We then filled her again. Meantime they were catching fish rapidly in the large boat, and we boarded her at four o'clock, tired out. My back was lame for a week afterward. Mr. ——— threw himself down on deck, and declared that he was used up. We voted unanimously to make sail for home, and, had the wind held good, we should have been in before dark. As it was, the wind lulled, and we passed Watch Hill moving slowly against

the ebb tide. I must not undertake to tell you what we did in the way of dinner that afternoon. We got the things up on deck, and, with every fresh attack on the eatables and drinkables, we seemed to acquire fresh hunger and thirst. It was positively alarming to see the manner in which we attacked the lamb, and chickens, and crackers, and claret.

The moon was high up, and very bright, when we shot slowly by the head of the steam-boat wharf, just as the train from Boston came down. The good people of Stonington had been on an excursion to Newport that day, and the excellent Stonington band were discoursing sweet music to a large crowd on the wharf. Rockets were occasionally thrown, and, on the whole, the scene was as lively and gay as you have ever found in the metropolis. We had no small pleasure in exhibiting our load of fish, which we now threw out on the pier to the astonished crowd. It was conceded beyond dispute that no such work had ever been done in one day out of that port, and probably it might be said generally. We had over three hundred fish, weighing from six to eleven pounds each, and fine fat fellows they were. Having selected all we wanted for our own use, we told the by-standers to help themselves, and they soon disappeared.

The truth of my account is well known to all the inhabitants of Stonington, to whom I refer skeptics. Or, if doubt still exists, I can only recommend the trial of the fishing there, and faith will be given, I am sure.

But see, the evening has stolen down on me before

I was aware of it, and the meek eyes of my Flora are shrouded in gloom. Yet they gleam joyously even through the darkness, and now in the twilight I can fancy they are the eyes I love indeed, and so I resign myself willingly to their dear company.

XIX.

April Storms.

Steamer C. Vanderbilt, April, 18—.

I LEFT Boston this afternoon, after passing some time there. The night is wearing away rapidly, but it lacks yet an hour or two of my accustomed time for sleep. A stiff gale of wind is blowing, but this magnificent vessel is staunch and firm, and I feel no motion, although my ears fairly ache with the howling of the storm through the iron braces. I have been some time at the wheel, and now, thanks to my friend, Mr. W——, I am occupying a comfortable arm-chair at the writing desk in his room; and, by your leave, I will devote to you the first hour of leisure for such a purpose that I have had in months. I have written to you from every place imaginable in past years; sometimes from my seat at the cabin door, and often from the trunk of a fallen hemlock on the river bank. But this is the perfection of comfort; and, if you value my letter at all, you must thank Mr. W—— first for placing me so much at my ease.

I am the more tempted to write, because this evening is stormy, and this day the anniversary of two storms, whereof I purpose now to give you a sketch.

The one was five years ago. It was a glorious morning, on the bank of the river, and the trout were wide awake, as also were Joe and myself. We had been in the cabin but two days, and had not yet taken a fish; and this morning broke so clearly, and the sun peered so pleasantly through the small window, that we promised ourselves a day of uncommon sport. Accordingly, after a breakfast such as Black alone could prepare, and such appetites as ours could well appreciate, we started out, rods in hand, to explore the windings of the creek. Turning over an occasional fallen tree, or driving our feet into the brown dust of a crumbling stump, we soon provided ourselves with wood-worms of every variety, and in a short time reached the deep basin, of which I have heretofore given you a very full description. The grass was fresh and green on the margin, while higher up the banks the dead leaves lay in masses, offering a soft bed, on which I fell carelessly, and watched the proceedings of my ally Joe, who was cautiously approaching the water. I saw him holding his rod in the right hand, and the line in his left; then, with a graceful wave, and a slight spring of the delicate tip, he cast his hook on the sheet which came down the rocks, and the next instant his rod bent with the pull of a heavy fish in the deep pool below. He was a capital hand to manage a rod, and in five minutes he had a noble trout in the still water at the side of the pond, where, taking off the butt of his rod, in which he had already placed his spear and landing-hook, he lifted out one of the finest fish I had ever seen.

But the battle had scared away all his fellows, and no more took the bait in that water.

While Joe was trying for another, I was lying on my back, looking up through the leafless branches of old trees at the still, blue sky. It never seemed nearer, never more beautiful and calm. I was wondering whether I should argue from it that heaven was nearer to us in the spring or in the winter of life, by reason of the absence of those obstructions which the summer interposes; but then I remembered that those very obstructions were beautiful blossoms, or emerald leaves, or golden fruits — dear affections, cherished hopes, or hard-earned treasures; and so, lost in a fit of moralizing, I did not notice that the sky became obscured, and I believe I was asleep when Joe returned with his load of fish, and told me it was about to rain.

We reached the cabin only in time to escape a soaking. The day continued showery, but toward evening the sun broke out, and lit the green tops of the hemlocks with that rich lustre which is peculiar to April sunsets among the mountains.

At nine o'clock I opened the cabin door. The moon sat, smiling, on the very brow of the mountain, and over it hung a dark cloud, with a faint line of silver along its edge. The moon sailed slowly up into it, and disappeared. At the same time I began to feel a chill in the air, and turned involuntarily to throw a fresh log on the blazing fire.

I watched the line of light on the eastern horizon slowly close in. It was half an hour, at the least, before

it quite vanished, and all was black—so black that you could not believe there was a moon in the sky. And now I began to hear, on the summit of the western mountain, the rush of wind through the branches of the stunted pine-trees, and an occasional loud, distinct wail, as if a hemlock had been toying with the breeze, but now complained of some unexpected rudeness. At intervals all these sounds would cease, and then I only heard the river passing over the rapid, and once the far-off cry of a panther on the mountain. I thought it was a panther, but Black insisted that it was the cry of the ghost that lingers around the Haunted Rock.

At length a deep silence, such as is never known except in the forest, seemed to fall suddenly on every thing. The very sound of the river seemed to become less a sound, and more *a thought*, and the hemlock and the wind were for a while at peace. Then I heard a low, deep roar, far off, either in the earth or the air: it seemed like the roar of the sea heard after an October gale. It approached nearer and nearer, and now the sky grew lighter, and I could see, traced dimly against the clouds, the gigantic trees which stood on the ridge across the river. They were not moving, but, spectre-like, stood calm and firm, awaiting the enemy. It came. At first they waved their heads to and fro, and tossed their arms uneasily. Then, slowly yielding to the steady blast, they bowed down, and the wind went wildly by them. I watched them steadily till my eyes ached, and at length a blinding snow squall came dashing down the river bed, and I closed the door hastily, and retreated to my bearskin.

Joe was lying quietly, toasting his feet at the fire. It was marvelous that they did not burn, for they were in the ashes, and a mass of coals close to them.

You have already a good idea of the appearance of that cabin in a stormy night. A warm and cozy nook it is, to which I give an uneasy, longing look in many a winter evening now, but which, alas! I am not to enjoy again. The storm was fearful. I never knew the wind to be more lawless. But as we lay on the cabin floor, gazing at the roof, lit by the fitful blaze on the hearth, listening to the sounds out of doors, we began, moved by a common impulse, to think of storms more terrible than any in this outer world, and of the great trees in the gardens of our hearts, grown up tall and stately, which those tempests had uprooted.

"Joe," said I, at length, as a memory flashed across my mind, "where is Ellen —— to-night?"

"Resting, I hope, in the arms she loved best of all the world."

Then we were silent, and then came slowly through my mind the incidents in the life of one of the dearest friends of our hearts.

It was on a moony night in April, long ago, that the chief incident in her life occurred. She was a school-girl then, gay, light-hearted, and happy—happy, because she loved one of the finest fellows in all the country, and was soon to be married to him. As usual in the tempests of which I now speak, Love raised the wind; and never a wind more tempestuous has been raised than that same Love can get up.

She was a wayward girl, and had not yet learned the severe lessons of life. She had read many novels too, and had romantic notions of love and of living, which she, poor child, thought were the most natural and truthful ideas in the world. And so, when the day of their wedding drew nearer, she began to act in accordance with them. She had a dewy lip, but Phil was forbidden to taste its sweetness. It would have been very wrong to allow a kiss upon those lips, even from her betrothed husband. She had a glorious waist, and a form of exquisite mould; but she shrank from his embrace, and forbade the touch of his hand upon her round shoulder. Yet one night he dared too much, and with bold lip he pressed a kiss on her white forehead, and another on her cheek. This was the commencement of a lovers' quarrel, and of its continuance none knew the history, except that the face of each grew sadder and sadder daily, till, one winter morning, the village gossips were shocked by the news that Phil was gone away to distant countries.

Gone, and alone! what could it mean? They guessed a thousand causes, but none guessed aright. Ellen had discarded him, that was clear; but why, none knew. A year and more sped swiftly. Her step grew slower and heavier daily. Her eye lost its brightness. It had been hard to part from him at any time, but how much harder as she began to feel the solemn truth that she had wronged him.

At length there came letters from him. He was now in Europe, now in Asia, now on the banks of the



lordly Nile. He was treading in the footsteps of the Israelites, was at Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem!

He wrote often, and his letters were sent from house to house about the village, and I remember how incredible it used then to appear to us that one of our little number had indeed bathed in the Jordan, or slept by the margin of Gennesaret.

At length, a longer silence than usual began to excite some anxiety in the minds of those that loved him best. Two, three months passed, and no letters reached us. A stray newspaper, that by some singular fatality reached the village, contained an account of the ravages of a terrible disease in Syria, and an American gentleman was said to have died in a lonely hut on the side of one of the hills of Lebanon. This caused an immediate and overwhelming fear, and I was dispatched to the city to procure what information I could of the lost one. All that I was able to learn served but to confirm the terrible fear. I was even so successful as to see a gentleman late from Beyroot, who had met Phil, and knew him well, and who informed me that it was currently reported before he left that he (Phil) had died in an obscure place among the mountains.

It was an April morning, this very date, that I returned to our quiet village with my painful intelligence. The father of my friend bore the news well; not so the mother. She was a weak woman, and it wellnigh killed her. But there was one to whom I knew that news would come with terrible force, and I forbore to tell her till urged to it by her immediate relatives.



I asked her to walk out with me. The moon was in the sky, serene and fair, and the air was balmy as in June. I told my story gently, but it was terrible in its effect. "Dead! dead! Oh God, I killed him!" was her only exclamation, and she sank, sobbing first, then senseless, on the ground. She sobbed at first. I knelt by her. There was a tempest then raging in her soul which surpassed in its tremendous force any of these elemental strifes in the external world. She buried her face in her hands, and moaned aloud. For the space of thirty seconds her agony passed all description, and then a shudder passed over her frame, and she fell prone upon the grass. I carried her into the house, and placed her in her mother's arms.

I pray that I may never again witness such a scene. Scoff as you please at such a story; smile, as you smiled when you heard it told last summer, my friend, but nevertheless it is a true history of the human heart, or of woman's heart, which is very human! Can you smile? Imagine that queenly girl, whose radiant arms I have so often seen wound around your neck; that holy woman, whose dove-eyes have spoken so often to my gaze of all her majestic love for you; that pure and perfect being, whose dark brown hair floats over her forehead like waves of musical waters over a pearly beach, who left her home in the Northland to live and die with you, locked in your arms, forever and forever; that object of your adoration, even before your God; that mother of your bold-eyed boy, who sleeps to-day under the snow-drifts, upon whose brow rests still, un-

touched by dust or death, and watched by angel guardians, the kiss your angel wife left lying there when I closed the coffin-lid, and shut him out of her sight until the awakening—think, I say, of her agony, if I should be the bearer to her of the sad news that the dust which is now your prison had been found crumbling, and that your soul had escaped through some fearful chasm. Yet Ellen —— loved him no less than your most noble wife loves you! Oh, men are very ready to sneer at love where others are concerned, but they love right well the clasp of snowy arms and the pressure of fond lips themselves!

An hour passed, which to the watchers by that fair body was as a year of bitter waiting. The storm passed by. One by one in the heaven above her came out the stars, and shone down mournfully but calmly into the depth of her young soul. Never had light reached so deeply in it before; but now, as she lay half dreaming, we could look into every recess, and we read the whole history there. At length she arose, and walked to the window, and looked eagerly out. It was very light, and the moon shone pleasantly down the village street, and the white houses gleamed among the trees, and all was calm, peaceful, and holy; and in her heart there was a profound calm, but bitterly sorrowful withal. She stood with her forehead pressed against the window, gazing earnestly across the street at the windows of the room Phil used to occupy in the old house. I stood by her side. Suddenly a carriage came rattling up the street, and the horses, foaming and hot, stopped



before the gate. I heard a voice exclaim, "The wrong side, driver!" I looked around; Ellen was gone. The next instant I saw her flying down the walk toward the gate, and heard her clear voice shouting, "Phil! Phil!" I thought she was mad, but she was sane. The familiar sound of his voice had reached her ear. It was he! He sprang from the carriage, and an instant after he brought her in his arms, as I had a few moments before in mine, and laid her on a sofa, and then turned to greet us.

Verily, it was an April evening, only the storms were like thunder-storms rather than April showers; and before that April had passed, we had a joyful wedding in the village, and the moon and the stars looked into the room through the shutters at the marriage festival; and if that same moon and those stars haven't long ago got used to contrasts, they must have wondered that night at the happiness of our queenly Ellen.

There, you have my story; and as I finish it, I am interrupted by a suggestion of my good friend, Mr. —, that if I want a cup of coffee before sleeping, I can find it below deck; so, by your leave, I will seek first the pantry, and then my state-room.

XX.

Black Island.

Block Island, August, 18—.

THE sun is just going down. The sky is beautiful, clear, deep, and very calm. The sea is sleeping. Not a breath of air moves its glassy surface, though a fresh breeze blows across the high land on which our house stands. A group of persons are on the opposite hill, near the iron spring, while against the sky you may see, on the summit of the beacon, several horses, each bearing a gentleman and lady. All eyes are directed toward that magnificent west. And now the glorious sun, gathering rapidly up the beams that have been dancing on the waves, and gladdening the yellow harvest fields, has wrapped them around him and is gone.

Peace be with us all to-night. We shall sleep well to the music of the sea, and I shall hear all night the old familiar songs. Peace be with all the world to-night. Wondrously kind, and pitiful, and prayerful are we in this island home, for we are so happy and so calm, that we would have all others so.

“In silence and sadness cometh the night,
In joy and gladness cometh the night,
In glory, majesty, and might,
Cometh the night.”

Now, one by one, or in somewhat weary couples, our party come in from the hills and the sea-shore. The green grass in front of the house offers a pleasant couch. The stone steps are covered. Here and there, on the lawn, a pillion, thrown from the tired horse, is occupied by a lady or a gentleman, and the front windows of the house are opened, that others may sit near them. Pleasant voices interrupt the monotonous sounds of the sea, and, as the night grows darker, we will sing our songs to the ocean, and the ocean shall reply.

We are here with one of the pleasantest parties ever gotten together for an expedition like this. We have a rare collection of cheerful faces and voices, and we have filled the house full—nay, more than full, if that were possible; for, while I content myself with a bed in the entry, shared by my friend S——, and guarding the door of the ladies under our especial protection, others (not of our party) are lodging elsewhere and eating at our table.

We have come to Block Island for a pleasant week. We know one another, and now that I reflect, I believe there is some sort of a cousinship between almost all the individuals of the party. Be that as it may, we have devised this expedition as a sort of seven days' picnic; and could you see us at any hour of the day, you would envy us the absence of restraint and the freedom with which we enjoy every thing.

Thus much to tell you who and what we are.

The family of Mr. Sands, our host, is the oldest and most respectable on the island. In a volume of Histor-

ical Collections which I found on the main land, I met with frequent mention of Captain James Sands, and his son, Captain John Sands, as most worthy and influential men on this island as early as the year 1670. Mr. Nathaniel Sands, the present head of the family, is a fit successor of those brave men. I have been seeking for the early history of the island, but can find none of it here. In the volume of Historical Collections aforementioned, however, I find a paper prepared by a clergyman, resident on the island some time prior to the Revolution, from which I have gleaned much interesting information. But I do not propose to annoy you with any detail, only giving you sufficient facts to enable you to appreciate the interest which such a locality presents.

Isolate, and consequently left to depend on their own resources for every thing, the islanders have for more than a century been a unique and remarkable people. Many of them, I am sorry to say, have, either by original or acquired sin, become most experienced land-sharks, and it is therefore becoming in all visitors to be wary of the boats which may board them in the offing. (Witness a demand of five dollars for fifteen minutes' use of a boat, when our own yawl was not immediately at hand.) Yet among the fishermen and boatmen are not a few hardy men of brave and bold hearts, with whom I have spent much time pleasantly and profitably. Their boats, which, from the total want of a harbor, are so built as to be readily hauled up on the beach, are schooner-rigged and very able. They will take you

on board, push out from among the stakes which are driven near the beach, make all sail in a twinkling, and then walk into the very eyes of a hurricane. But in all weather, now lying idle day by day in close, hot fogs, now flying like the wind before a storm, or lying down close to a gale, drenched with the salt spray, they are equally contented and comfortable in whatever position placed, and sleep as well on the stone ballast in the bottoms of their egg-shells as on the corn-husk mattresses in their warmest houses.

There are many fine farms on the island, which are valued at one hundred and fifty and even two hundred dollars an acre. Grain of all kinds grows well. Sheep thrive admirably, and if they would but build sheds for their cattle, they might increase their already large production of butter and cheese. Newport is their best market (and, by-the-by, my dear —, thanks to your unconscionable appetites at the Bellevue House, we are short of poultry here, and we can't have chickens, which ought to form the chief ornament of a Block Island table. It is unpardonable that your extremely unfashionable feeding at the large houses should result in condemning us to an unmerciful routine of blue fish and chowder, cod and tautog).

But I weary you with statistics. I have written this letter, more than otherwise, as an introduction to some few which I propose to give you from this look-out.

Our days pass pleasantly. We rise (I very early, to make room for the wards, across whose door I sleep), and breakfast at eight. Previous to breakfast, a bath in

the surf is invigorating; after that, we mount the horses, each gentleman taking a lady on the pillion behind him, and we have a gallop along the sands. Then we turn into the country, and call at a house or two, and return to dinner (*mirabile dictu*!) at half past eleven! Think of that! Just six hours in advance of my regular dinner hour, and one and a half of luncheon! yet we have marvelous appetites for chowder and blue fish, though, to say truth, we do begin to grow tired of them, but our hosts are so kind and anxious that we can't summon up courage to tell them so. After dinner, siestas and cigars, then a drive in the omnibus—a two-wheeled cart, which I have caused to be rigged with three seats across it, on which nine ladies can ride, while as many gentlemen can, if they choose, walk at the side. Toward sunset, a walk to the boiling spring, or along the sands, and then tea, and then—now!

It is the pleasantest hour of the day. The sky is as clear and joyful as if new stars had been to-night created, and their brethren were singing a new anthem with all the sons of God. It is such a night as the Chaldeans of old would have loved, and as we stargazers, too, love and worship. I can hear, even now, far away in the arches of heaven, the echoing of that old song, sung when the earth was rocked to its first slumber—now low and faint, as the distant sound of the surf, now triumphant as the march of a victorious army.

And now voices less spiritual, perhaps, but equally welcome to mortal ears (thank God for the gentle

voices we love), are singing songs of the earth, and we listen willingly. The group around the door gathers closer and closer together. You never would have supposed so many could sit on the steps. The same shawls and gentlemen's overcoats are thrown around two or three forms as they twine their arms around each other. The sea air comes up chillily, but so mingled with sweet sounds, and so laden with cool caresses, that we will not be driven in. A brilliant point suddenly gleams out at the zenith, sways to and fro, and flickers like a beacon-light in a sea wind, then with a train of silver light shoots down across the sky, already so radiant with star-dust. A happy yet solemn silence seals all our lips, and we forget for a moment that there is any space between the sad world and the holy stars. We never leave the steps until midnight.

XXI.

A Block Island Sunday.

Block Island, August, 18—.

YESTERDAY we attended church on the island.

A more quiet Sunday morning was never witnessed. Not a sound was heard but that everlasting murmur of the sea, and yet it is always so quiet here that the only change we observed was in the closed doors of the houses on the neighboring hills. We placed the ladies in the omnibus (the cart aforementioned), and walked leisurely ourselves by its side. Up and down hill, steadily progressing, yet at each turn of the road seeming to be nearer home than at the last turn, we at length reach the low-roofed house, where a worthy man reasons weekly (but by no means *weakly*) to his congregation of "righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come." The room may be capable of seating two hundred persons, and nearly as many were present. A more respectable and orderly assembly I have never seen.

The first and most obvious reflection in my mind was that in which I have frequently before indulged, namely, on the simple and sublime beauty of our most holy religion. I have spent a lifetime (thus much of it) in communion with men of all ages and all creeds. For many years of ardent and somewhat skeptical youth, I

worshipped the star that shone over the cottage of the son of Sophroniscus, and listened in rapt awe to the teachings of his great pupil. My first thought on entering this house was to contrast our creed and its teachings with the sublime but dark doctrines of the Academy, the Porch, and the Lyceum.

In the golden age of Greece, some few old men, worn with lives of hard toil in the closet, and melancholy because lonely study, on the magnificent portico of some temple of idolatry, or in groves peopled with the costly sculpture of princely artists, taught the words of half true, half dreamy philosophy to a small group of listeners, who were children of wealth, and pomp, and magnificence, while the millions worshipped in gloom and awe the countless deities of a heathen mythology. Two thousand years have passed, and on a surf-beaten island in the ocean, a plain but earnest man, in simple yet noble language, directs the gaze of his hearers, hardy fishermen and farmers, to the star which shone two thousand years ago above the plains of Judea, to the cross which gleamed two thousand years ago by the walls of Jerusalem. The groves of the Academy are gone! The Parthenon has crumbled. The song of the temple is hushed, and the smoke of the Jewish sacrifice has forever ceased to ascend! The ruthless hand of Bacon, leading on the hosts of modern utilitarianism, has scattered all the fair flowers of ancient philosophy, and Aristotle, and Plato, and Socrates are remembered in few homes, and are no longer the household gods in any; but the creed of our Savior is taught on the main

land and the islands of the sea, and the children of poverty and lowliness know, as well as the rich, the deepest of its mysteries.

Who will wonder, then, that the distant sound of the sea, as I sat by the window yesterday, was to me like the murmur of Gennesaret, and that in the voice of the preacher I heard tones to which I would willingly have listened longer. He was a fit man for his place. And yet it was strange to hear him warning his flock of the dangers of wandering out into the world! One couldn't well imagine what danger there was, since it was only on the dim northern horizon that a blue line of land marked the outer boundary of that world, and not one in twenty of his hearers had ever been nearer to it. But he told them that if they loved the creed of Christ and wandered from it, there was hope for them; but if they had only professed, and that falsely, to love it, there was little hope that they would return when once away; and he likened them, under such circumstances, to the raven and dove which Noah sent from the ark. The raven found enough of corruption floating on the surface of the restless waters to gratify his base desires and natural tastes, and returned no more; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and came back wearied, and glad to find refuge.

Seeing many strangers in his congregation, he especially invited them to aid in the singing, and, after the sermon, he invited remarks from any present; but I fancy none of our party were given to moralizing from the desk.

As the evening began to come, and the grave-stones made long shadows down the hill side, we went to the old grave-yard on the west side, and strolled where the islanders are wont to go when they have done with rocking on the ocean. "A snug place to lie, this," said Mr. — to me. "Ay, one might sleep well here, assured of a ceaseless lullaby till the judgment," said I, turning to the sea. Here is the grave of old Simon Ray, the father and teacher of the islanders for nearly a century. He died almost a hundred years ago, and had then lived a hundred and two years. His grave-stone recites his virtues, and the debt of gratitude which the island owes to him. It is especially worthy of note how many unmarked graves are here. The broad hill side is covered with mounds, under which are mouldering the bones of men that had battled well with winds and waves, and at length found rest here, and are utterly forgotten. The contrast between life and death here is peculiarly startling. A living Block Islander is a very different object from a dead one, and to see one living, you would not believe, though he were gray, that he would ever die. But time, here as elsewhere, "sadly overcometh all things," and even the island itself wears slowly away from the southward, though it makes out to the northward.

This morning we took a long ride. Another gentleman and myself went on horseback to Clay Head. We had a lady on each horse with us (on pillions), and rode all the way with our horses' fetlocks wet by the surf. From the top of the bluff, as also from every bluff on

the island, you may look over a broad sea view, and examine to your heart's content the "waste of waters." We picked up lots of shells on the shore, and it would have done you a deal of good to see the millions of blue fish in the surf, so close to the shore that we could distinguish their eyes and scales. These fish follow the lance fish and bait fish into the shoalest water, and are often taken from the shore by heaving and hauling. I have not fished any as yet. The water is full of them, but I have been sufficiently occupied on land.

Last evening a sacred concert was announced to take place in front of the house after tea; and we have the material in our company for fine music. I was walking down from the iron spring with a lady, when the soft notes of "Ave Sanctissima" came floating to us with a richness and sweetness I can not well describe. Then followed old familiar hymns and melodies that sounded like childhood come back again. In truth, it was a pleasant Sabbath evening. We sang, as usual, till nearly midnight.

This morning S—— had a somewhat sudden bath. He was politely offering his hand to a lady to help her up on a rock around which the waves were dashing, when he slipped and fell backward. A large wave (which is, like a shark, always ready when there is any thing to be had) came up, and took him off on the return. He swam quietly around, and, making the best of it, since he was in, took a bath, and came out at his leisure. It is comfortable, at all events, to dress, as we

do here, in such a way as to make little odds whether we are in or out of the water.

Some of our gentlemen have been fishing this morning, and returned with fifty or sixty blue fish and half a dozen bass—the blue fish weighing from seven to eleven pounds each, and the bass say fifteen pounds apiece.

This afternoon, should all things prosper, we will go over to the Southeast Bluffs, and I will tell you an Indian legend thereof, with which my book of Historical Collections has furnished me.

XXII.

The Southeast Bluff.

Block Island, August, 18—.

THE dust of many portions of the earth is sacred, as having in former years been the prison of spiritual existence. There is an old and favorite saying of writers who would create effect, to this purpose, that the earth has been buried over and over with the dead, and all of the ground on which we tread has been, at some time or other, thrown up to make room for the clay of man to form a portion of its kindred clay. To you who are wiser, and less apt to use words for mere effect, I need not say that this is all poetic license, and that all the people that have walked the earth during the last six thousand years would lie comfortably enough, side by side, in the earth of New York State, and have room to turn over, if perchance they should grow restless in their slumbers.

Nevertheless, the dust we daily tread on may have been the dust that was once humanity, and the violets we gather in the fields may spring from above blue eyes; and there are, as I before said, portions of the earth sanctified by the repose of men, and portions enriched with the dust of nations. There lie swarthy Ethiops in myriads under the soil of Africa, and keen-

eyed Parthians under the old plains of Asia Minor, and stalwart Greeks close by the Acropolis, and rough-visaged Huns and Goths scattered from the gates of old Rome to the Frozen Ocean. And they sleep well withal, and men walk over them, heedless that the dust on their sandals is the dust of some gaunt Visigoth, of Attila the Hun himself, or mayhap the scattered fragments of the Cæsars!

You are beginning to ask what this has to do with Block Island? I will proceed to tell you. In my last I described the grave-yard where the old men of the present race of inhabitants have found repose. I have now to speak of those who preceded them, and whose dust has mingled with the dust of the island. The island was formerly inhabited by a tribe of Indians who were more given to war and strife than any of the tribes of New England. They had no connection with any of the aboriginal inhabitants of the main land, but were constantly quarreling with them, and when there was no other cause of dispute, they found it easy to make one by a predatory excursion on the main.

This state of things had continued so long that a determination was at length had to destroy the islanders, and remove their very name from among the nations of this world. To this end (as I learn from my book of Historical Collections), the Mohegans gathered in force, and prepared to cross to the island. If you ask me what the Mohegans were doing down this way, I can't answer you. My authority is the book aforesaid, and I am only responsible for such history as I manufacture

myself. Yet the writer speaks so confidently of them, that I think he must be correct, and am led, therefore, to date the period of this battle in that remote time when the lordly Mohegans were masters from the great lakes to the sea, and the council-fire on the banks of their majestic river was surrounded by chieftains from the shore of the Atlantic and the waters of the beautiful Ohio. That was before divisions and dissensions had separated them, and long before the foot of the white man had defiled their shores.

I don't know why it is that the sea has such a bad influence on human nature, but there are more bad men on its shores than elsewhere: that is indisputable. I have told you that many of the present Block Islanders are sharks: their predecessors were no better; they were very devils, as my story will show you.

They had devised an expedition to the main land. No disturbance had occurred for a long while, and their hands were growing weak with idleness. Accordingly, it was resolved, in full council, that the whole tribe should go to the main, and wake up the Mohegans with the war-whoop.

They started on a moonlight evening in autumn. Carrying their bark canoes down to the shore, they launched them skillfully through the surf, and a thousand men were afloat as the night closed in. At this time, I should remark, the large pond in the centre of the island was a bay, for the sand has since closed it in, and the hills were covered with forest timber, which has since been cut away. The Southeast Bluffs were

far more steep and lofty than now, albeit they are still sufficiently so for the purposes of my story. There was then one bluff which was nearly two hundred feet above the sea, and the heavy surge had washed the earth away until it overhung the very edge of the surf. The only access to it was by the steep but grass-grown slope on the land side, at the foot of which a grove of magnificent oaks then stood.

Scarcely had the flotilla of canoes left the shore of the island, when the leader in the foremost boat thought, as he rose on a wave, that he saw in the northern horizon a strange black mass moving toward him. It required an Indian's eye to distinguish it at all; but he very soon recognized the canoes of the Mohegans. The islanders returned to the shore undiscovered, and carried their canoes up into the forest. Two hundred canoes brought the Mohegans to the assault, and, confident of surprising their enemies, they landed without caution, and entered the forest.

A profound stillness rested on all things, broken only by the surge on the beach, until the last band of invaders had passed from the moonlight into the shadow of the trees, and then a yell rang through the forest and over the sea, such as the sea never heard before or since on that shore. I can not pause to describe the horrors of that fight. It was not as battles in our days are fought, when the cannon and the musketry mow down thousands in an hour, but it was a long contest, hand to hand, foot to foot, breast to breast. It lasted four days and four nights with inconceivable fury. Men

lived on each other's blood. There was no thought of rest or yielding. The first movement of the islanders had been to destroy the boats of the Mohegans, and their women removed and concealed their own. It was useless then for the invaders to think of any retreat; they must conquer or die. With that stern determination that distinguished the North American Indian, they prepared themselves for the alternative, and fought on manfully. The deeds of valor wrought in such days are left to the imagination of the poet, for the pen of no historian has recorded them. They were men for whom Godfrey would have given his right arm to have them in Jerusalem. What scenes the stars look down upon! That night they saw the mailed Christian hosts hewing down the swarthy Paynims, and heard the "Deus Vult" echoed ten thousand times from the walls of the Holy City, and at the same moment (who can say I speak falsely?) they saw through the overhanging forest the red left hands of a thousand savage warriors, grasping each the throat of his foe, while their right hands struck murderous blows with heavy axes of stone, or with keen knives of ivory-like bone, and the shrieks of slayer and slain were heard over the thunder of the sea. There fell a gallant blow for Christ and for Jerusalem on the crest of the Saracen, and he went down in the roar of the battle. Here the bare brow of the red man was crushed with the rude hatchet of his foe. There, through the city gates, the war rolled on, with cries of madness and shouts of victory, with wailing of women, and neighing of steeds, and exultant

shouts, "Jerusalem," "The Cross," "God wills it," "Godfrey, Godfrey," "France to the rescue," "Raymond for the Sepulchre," and a thousand like cries, wherewith Europe frightened the infidels from the walls of the Holy City. Here, the wild cry of man thirsting for the blood of man, the alternate silence of the deep forest, and the war-whoop of three thousand fiends. But which was maddest, which fought for the best cause, who can say? So goes the world! Did it ever occur to you before what the Indians in America were doing when the Crusaders were before the walls of Jerusalem? But I forget my story.

The battle continued, as I have said, four nights and four days, and on the evening of the fourth day, about one hundred Mohegans made a last rally at the foot of the slope, which ascended to the summit of the bluff I have spoken of.

Here the battle ceased. Nearly two thousand of their companions lay dead on the island, and the conquerors paused from their work of destruction. As they entered the grove of oaks, the Mohegans retired toward the summit of the bluff, and stood like tigers at bay. Once a fierce attack was made by the islanders, but they were beaten back like hounds, and shrank into the forest. They then sat down at the base of the hill in full force, and kept their foes as prisoners on the high bluff. Thrice after that the sun rose and set, and no sound was heard from the summit of the hill, by day or by night, except that at times the listeners fancied that the music of the sea was mingled with the death-song

of some dying warriors. At each early dawn they could see the gaunt forms of the Mohegans against the sky, as they watched for the coming of the sun, and all the day long they saw them lie prone on the grass, motionless and silent, as if already dead. At length there were fewer forms awaiting the sunrise, and fewer resting on the sward, till at last the number dwindled down to ten, and the next morning but two waited the coming of the dawn. Those two stood calmly till the sun was up, and then lay silently till he went down in the west. The surf-roar at the base of the hill was more musical that night than ever, and from time to time the watchers in the grove heard distinctly the triumphant song of a Mohegan brave, welcoming the sunlight of the blessed land that stole gently in on his soul. The moon was gone at midnight. The stars were clear, and, as always, mournfully calm. The dawn came slowly into the eastern sky, but no form waited its coming on the summit of the hill. The sun rose, and, as he rose, a solitary sea-bird wheeled with a wild note, as if of triumph, around the hill top, and shrieked her defiance to the thousand men who rested in the valley below.

Slowly and cautiously the islanders advanced toward the bluff. There was no need of caution, for there was no tenant on the hill, living or dead ; but as they crowded up from the forest, and looked in one another's faces with doubtful awe, a hundred sea-gulls circled above their heads with wild screams, and the hoarse voice of the ocean thundered, as of old, below.

And the ocean is thundering on the shore with the same deep voice to-day, and the sea-gulls wheel in swift circles above the summit of the bluff. And if you will go at evening to that sacred spot, and lie down on the ground with your ear pressed to the earth, you will hear a wild melody such as you never heard elsewhere, that the Indian warriors fancied was the voice of the brave dead chaunting old songs. I fancy it is the murmur of the sea among the rocks at the base of the hill.

It is with great difficulty that I have succeeded in writing so much, for I have been interrupted frequently by calls to other employments. First, there was a walk to the spring. There I bathed my head in the icy water, and was much refreshed thereby. Then there was a gallop along the sands, with a fair lady on the pillion behind me. Then there was a call to the house-top to see the sunset; and then a concert on the front steps, which occupied till nearly midnight, as usual. And now I am finishing this letter somewhere among "the wee hours," the whole household being still, and, I trust, sleeping. I am sure they need sleep, for what with midnight concerts on the front steps and morning baths in the surf, there isn't much rest obtained during the night time.

Imagine the astonishment of the Block Islanders the other day at seeing that elegant steamer, the C. Vanderbilt, anchored just outside of the surf on the east side. She came over with a party from Stonington, and her officers had their hands full in exhibiting her

to the islanders who boarded her. They had never seen such a craft here before, and the women and children were struck with exceeding wonderment at the splendid furniture and massive mirrors. They had never seen themselves at full length before! The fishermen displayed their usual keenness for a bargain, and demanded twenty-five cents a head to set the passengers on shore and return them; whereat the captain, with his accustomed promptitude, ordered their fasts to be cast off, and set his passengers ashore in the quarter boats. He procured the aid of one man, with two or three boats, for a certain sum; and I heard the others on shore, in the afternoon, blessing that one with left-handed blessings, and saying he had prevented their making fifty dollars. Toward evening they were getting more and more angry, and I am not sure that by this time they have not lynched the poor fellow.

XXIII.

Road Companions.

Niagara Falls, May, 18—.

I AM writing within sound of the roar of the cataract. In former visits to Niagara I have not written to you, for I have fancied the subject too trite and worn, and I did not like to tell old tales over again; and I write more for the purpose of telling you of persons, and thoughts, and incidents of travel, than to relate old stories of old routes. We travel for the sake of seeing faces quite as much as places, and the dinner-table at the Cataract House is as interesting a view as the great Fall.

We left Stonington with the pleasantest party which was ever made up for a summer or spring journey, and, though the night was clear, the wind blew a gale from the northwest, and we did not reach New York till a few minutes after seven in the morning. The Commodore is well manned, however, and, thanks to her gentlemanly officers, our large party of fifteen or twenty was admirably cared for. They were not all to accompany us as far as the Falls. When we reached New York the Erie Rail-road boat had left her wharf. Seven o'clock was the hour of departure, and it was already ten minutes after. Thanks to the kindness of the

officers of the Commodore, a plank was thrown out for us before she made fast to the wharf, and we sprang ashore. My carriage was waiting, and we drove on a run to the foot of Courtlandt Street; dashed on the ferry-boat at a quarter past seven o'clock, the horses in a foam; crossed the river, and drove to the Ramapo dépôt, finding, as I had hoped, that the Erie train had been detained ten minutes; and the conductor was calling out to go ahead as we drove up. With all the courtesy possible, he waited till we were comfortably seated, and then we flew westward. In the evening, twenty-four hours after leaving Stonington, we had traveled nearly five hundred miles, and had not paused ten successive minutes.

I will not pause now to speak of the Erie Rail-road, of which I have often written to you. Before I return eastward, I will, by your leave, say much in relation to it, contenting myself now with saying that no summer tourist will fail to pass over this route, which, for magnificence of scenery, is unequaled by any rail-road line in the world. I used to think that the Baltimore and Ohio Rail-road was unsurpassed in this respect, but the Erie road has no rival. The cars ring with the constant exclamations of the astonished passengers at some new beauty, some stupendous work of art, some fathomless ravine, some splendid waterfall; and to those of us who were familiar with the banks of the Delaware in the old times, when the Hudson River and the Newburgh and Cohecton turnpike were the route to approach it, this swift flight through the wilds where

we formerly toiled with our rifles on our shoulders is especially startling and astounding. I have seen an advertisement of a summer hotel at White Lake! It seems to be profanity to introduce the vulgar crowd to these haunts of our adventurous boyhood, and to throw open to public gaze the forests and streams which were known only by the exquisite penciling of our friend Street, who used to loiter thereabouts. It seemed strange, I say, to pass with crowded cars through those wilds, and we looked around us to see who were with us. There were grave senators and laughing girls, Western farmers and Eastern speculators, old and young, rich and poor, happy and mourning, all kinds and all classes, flying over those two black lines which lie along the ground. These lines are poetry. I have caught myself reading a hundred stories of the passers-by as I was walking along a rail-road track.

There was a bridal party near us. We killed a forenoon in observing them; and there was a party of sad mourners near them, who occupied us during the afternoon. Let me sketch the former party, so that, if their eyes light on this, they may recognize themselves. The lady was small, under the medium size, wearing a plain merino traveling dress, without ornament of any kind, and a dark traveling hat, with broad blue ribbon tied under her chin. A heavy blue veil was occasionally thrown over her head and face while she slept. That she was intelligent was manifest from her appearance, as well as from the character of her reading, for I caught sight of De Quincy's "Cæsars" and Hawthorne's "House

of Seven Gables" in her hands during the day, neither of which are for common readers.

The gentleman was a broad-shouldered, stout young man, with rather prominent features, and dark black whiskers, long and pointed under the chin, in the old Spanish style; hair rather dark, overhanging his forehead, which in turn overhung dark eyes. He wore a light drab summer overcoat, somewhat elegantly finished, a high collar, and black silk cravat. There was a Quakerish simplicity about both dresses. A long, superb gentleman's traveling shawl (precisely like my own) was thrown over his lap, and wrapped in half a dozen folds around the lady, which shawl, by-the-by, seemed to be an invaluable traveling companion, as I have often found it myself—it is so much more convenient than a cloak or a coat. One never needs to be told that a party is a bridal party. The fact always manifests itself by a thousand nameless attentions, glances, smiles, exchanges of what the French call "regards," and a mutual anxiety that each should see all there is to be seen and enjoy all there is to be enjoyed. We were considerably amused and edified by our fellow-travelers, and laid up store of hints to guide ourselves, should any of our party ever form one of such a duet as that; and I may add that the same party accompanied us to Niagara, and sat on our side of the breakfast-table this morning at the Cataract House.

I said there was another group that attracted our attention. Perhaps they did not occupy our minds so much as the following day, on Seneca Lake, when we saw them in the cabin of the steamer.

I know, if the eyes of any of that group meet these lines, I shall be pardoned for sketching their appearance. The principal feature of the party was the face of a young lady, from whose sad eyes the light of life was almost gone. It was a calm and once happy face, for its lines were delicate and beautiful withal, and somehow the lips seemed to be such as in former days smiles would have loved to linger around. We could not look unmoved on such a face, and what made it sadder to see the fading flower was that another (evidently her mother) watched sedulously lest a rude breath of wind should touch her daughter's cheek; and both of them were dressed in the deepest mourning, as if some one they loved had gone but lately, whither this other was about to follow. It did not appear that we could be of assistance in any way to the feebleness of the suffering girl, and we forbore to make any useless proffer of services, but our hearts were touched by her patient face, and our prayers followed her, and follow her yet, though we can not believe that she yet lingers on this side the river. We fancied (and told each other our fancies) all manner of stories of that gentle one. We told over to ourselves the merry days of girlhood, the gay, wild fancies of her youth. We wondered where she lived, and whom she loved, and whether any and how many would weep when she was of the dust. Of the dust! We said the words, and they startled us, and we thought of the June flowers blooming over her, and the voices she loved to hear making the same old melodies, but not for her, and of the birds she cherish-

ed, and the songs she sang, and the hearts she gladdened with her glad young heart, and we thought a thousand such sad things ; and then came, as it always comes with the voice of a gentle one in our party, a sentence of high hope, and we thought no longer of the grave, or the flowers above it, but we fancied the crown that was waiting for her, and the song which the seraphim were singing, yet without full choir, since they waited for one more voice ! They left us at Geneva. We know not who they were, or where they went, but if their eyes meet this, or if her eyes have closed, and others, through long weeping for her, have grown dim, and can read only through tears, they may know that strangers have looked with no cold or curious gaze on their sadness, and that they were not traveling among those altogether indifferent and selfish. It can scarcely be supposed that in the deep sorrow which manifestly overpowered them, they noticed those who sat near them, apparently occupied with books, or pencils and paper, or their own gay conversation, but who nevertheless exercised the right of human nature to sympathize with its common humanity.

P.S.—Since writing the above, we accidentally met a lady from Geneva, who, on hearing us speak of the group in the cars and on the lake, immediately recognized the mother and daughter, and gave us the sad addition to our story, that the young lady, after living a very few days at her home in Geneva, went away by the dark road. She added some very touching incidents in her history, which belong to only a few hearts,

and we may not repeat them here. On reading over what I have written, I see nothing I would change. We had traveled a few miles on the same great journey together, and she has reached its end. We travel on, strangers and friends, all with earnest faces toward the rest that remaineth for some of us! Death follows our footsteps constantly. But a few weeks ago, in the last winter's gayeties, I met often a young and happy face. One evening she was in the dance; at the next, my friend Joe called my attention to the fact that she was gone. She, too, had passed away. "And this," said my cynic friend, looking on the crowded rooms and the swift flight of the dance, "and this is what men call life!" "Faith, Joe, yes," was my reply. "And what else is it? Smiles that mean nothing, thoughtless words, a glare of noonday, a dance, a feast, a close wrapping of your cloak about you, and a shiver as you step out into the darkness! Isn't that life, Joe?" The cynic smiled, and even in that gay scene pointed his finger hopefully upward. But see—I am preaching a sermon in my postscript!

XXIV.

A September Morning.

New York, September, 18—.

THE pleasant light of a cool morning falls gently on the floor of my room; and when I opened the window a few moments ago, the fresh breeze from the northwest sent my paper flying across the carpet, and scattered my pens in every direction.

On my left is seated my friend Joe, who has come to visit me for a little while. He is living now in a home among the hills, and he sometimes drops down on me of a sudden, and startles me with his unexpected presence. Yesterday morning he came, and we have talked a day and a night away, and he is now reading while I write.

Our last subject of conversation was the month and its memories, whereby I am reminded of the morning in September when we were in the cabin together, of which we have talked for an hour.

It was such a morning as this, some ten years ago, that, having set out for the forest, we arrived at the bridge, and, leaving our horses as usual there, entered cover, and made our way up toward the creek. The first five miles of our tramp was performed in almost perfect silence, for we were planning, each with him-

self, the fall sport. I was cogitating on the probable success of any attempt to coax trout to take a fly, and Willis, as he subsequently told me, was thinking over the various approaches to a certain hollow, in which he had twice found black bears. About six miles above the bridge there is an oak opening, where a little stream, after dashing down a mountain side, trickles slowly over a gravel bed into the river, and where the large old hills, entirely free from underbrush, make a dense shade, in which the grass grows luxuriantly, and the wild flowers bloom in profusion. The sun steals down to the grass in threads of light, and the branches above form arches of green, which shut out the sky entirely.

We approached this spot in the usual way, along the edge of the water, and I was carefully looking to my footsteps, while Joe was four paces behind me, when I was startled by the crack of his rifle over my head, and, looking up, saw that he had shot a partridge that was sitting on a fallen tree on the side of the brook. It was already afternoon, and, being well disposed to lunch, we had a fire kindled, and the partridge was hanging over it in a few minutes. The long vine to which we fastened the bird hung from the branch of a sapling, and the pieces of the old tree blazed up finely about him. In fifteen minutes, or thereabout, he was cooked to perfection, and our case furnished salt, and Joe's pockets, on being turned out, produced a quantity of crackers, and a couple of smoked herring (none of your dry, Maine sticks, but a pair of regular buckies). We had no birch bark whereof to make those plates which add

so pleasant an aroma to food in the woods ; but we had good appetites, and in a brief space of time we had demolished the bird, and were wiping our fingers on the leaves, for want of better napkins.

Then stretched on the grass by the bank of the river, which lapsed by us gently over a rocky bed, we lounged an hour, and planned the fall campaign. We had not told Black that we should come, and he would not expect us. Possibly he was away. But the cabin was never locked, and we should find the larder well supplied. It was not often empty. The dogs had been with Black all summer. Nora was young, and Echo was also in training. John and Leo, and a lithe and beautiful hound called Pedro, were all in perfect condition. We might safely calculate on a season of rare sport, and we were proposing to commence early the next morning, when I caught the sound of a dog on the mountain. Springing to our feet, we listened five minutes, and then knew where they were. It was impossible to be mistaken, for we knew every inch of the country for twenty miles square. They were in the cedar hollow, three miles away, and were running up the glen. If the deer took the mountain at the hickory swale, he would not come to the river ; but if he kept on up the hollow, he would turn immediately before he reached Bill Gardiner's cabin ; and, passing over the ridge at the big gully, would come down to the water. There then remained but one chance against his coming near us, for we were on one of the best runs in the country. This was, that, if the swamp path were thick,

he would turn off in the middle of it, and take water two miles to the northward. But the wind was southerly. The long limbs and branches of a peculiar willow-like bush, which abounded in the swamp, lay over the path only when the wind was from the northward, and we therefore took our places to wait the result. Now louder, now fainter, as they passed the hollows, or entered denser forests, we could hear the cry of the hounds as they followed the game. At length, by a burst of music, we knew they had reached the swale, and the next instant we lost their voices. It was all right. They had followed up the hollow, and we should be sure to hear them when they crossed the ridge. At length it came—full, rich, and clear as a bugle, the voice of old John, which I always knew among a thousand. But, now that he was speaking and the rest were silent, I knew that the deer must have doubled on them, or played some trick by which they had separated. The next instant explained it, for we heard Pedro's sharp cry down the hollow again, as he followed the curious windings of that most curious ravine.

It was now questionable whether any other person was near us on the run. We could hardly think the dogs were off on a hunt by themselves. A few croaks of a frog from Joe, succeeded by the hoot of an owl from myself, echoed through the wood, but received no answer; and the next moment we heard John's voice coming down the hill toward the elder swamp. Then he came straight through it, and an instant afterward, far in advance of the dog, flying like the wind, with

long, graceful leaps, four bucks came over the brush and down the bed of the brook. The leader was a splendid fellow. His fine head was thrown up, and his antlers lay back on his neck, as he snuffed the smoke of our fire, and flashed his eye around to discover its cause. But the speed was headlong, and he did not hesitate. Joe lay in a tuft of grass near a stump. I was behind the fallen tree I before mentioned. The opening was a hundred and fifty yards wide, and a score of leaps brought the deer almost upon us.

At that instant came a long, shrill scream, like the panther's cry, from across the river, and, without looking over my shoulder, I knew that Black was there. Joe heard it also. Manifestly we ought to let the game pass us to take the water. Two of them we might fairly claim, and Black should have a chance for the third or fourth. Joe uttered a guttural croak, which was as distinctly significant as words could be, and I replied in the same dialect. Accordingly, we both lay quiet. They dashed down toward us. As they passed within a dozen yards of me, they shied with fright, and leaped suddenly with doubly as long leaps, but the next instant they passed Joe and saw him distinctly. Never was there seen a wilder fright. It was painful to see the strained limbs and staring eyes of the noble animals as with one frightened look they sprang into the water. It was shoal for ten rods, and they were making swift progress toward deep water as we rose to our feet.

"Take the last one, Joe," I exclaimed, as I sent my bullet after the last but one, who was a dark red deer,

with five prongs to his antlers. I did not hear Joe's rifle, which cracked simultaneously with mine. The last one fell. Joe's aim was, as usual, unerring. But the one that I thought to stop kept steadily on, and my ball went skipping over the water. A moment afterward Black made his appearance, and his ball stopped the first one. But he was in the middle of the river, and his body drifted down, and we never recovered it. The two which remained now wheeled. They were swimming, but regained footing in a moment; and as we disappeared behind trees, they began to make for the very point at which we stood. They came along rather leisurely than otherwise, made very even jumps side by side, and seemed to have forgotten their alarm. I had John lying by my side. He was impatient to meet them, and I was about to let him go, when I observed a doubtful footstep of one of the deer. I signalized Willis to keep quiet. The two came along out of the water, but as they reached the bank, they came more and more slowly, until one of them staggered and fell on the grass a few rods from me. The other stopped by his side, and stretched his head down to look at his fallen companion. The latter, slowly lifting himself on his fore feet, tried to rise, but, finding it impossible, lay down easily, with his head raised up, and his eyes fixed imploringly on the eyes of his ally and friend. For more than a minute this scene continued, while we looked on, and then the unhurt deer, catching sight of Black on the opposite shore, made two swift circles round the fallen one, dashed toward the mountain, then back again to look into the large blue eyes of his dying

friend, and then rushed like the wind into the thicket, and was gone. I would not have shot him for a thousand dollars.

My aim had not been so bad. The ball had entered under the fore shoulder, and came out in front. The deer did not feel it so much in the water, the cold of which, perhaps, for the moment, prevented the bleeding; but as he came out his strength left him, and he was dying as I advanced to draw my knife across his throat.

I have often heretofore told you of that pitiful expression in the large blue eye of a dying deer. It is the most painful thing, after all, about our forest sports, and I always regret the death of the game when I see that mournful eye.

Joe recovered his venison from the water, and we soon disposed the saddles for carrying. It was a long and weary tramp we had that afternoon to the cabin, each of us loaded with half a hundred of venison, besides our rifles, and small traps of various sorts. Black met us with the canoe two miles below the cabin, and we poled up against the current. But the sun was setting as we reached the mouth of the creek, and the white face of the haunted rock was silvered with the light of the rising moon. How we did eat that night! The memory of such an appetite is pleasant in these moderate days, and venison is never so good as in September—never so palatable as within four hours after death, and was never so well cooked or so well eaten any where as it used to be in Owl Creek Cabin. Dispute me who dare!

XXV.

A September Day.

Stonington, September, 18—.

INVENT, if you can, a more uncomfortable position than was my office in Wall Street yesterday morning. The heat of the summer was over, I had imagined, and so, most unsuspectingly, I came back to New York and commenced to work, thinking to make up by hard labor for a long period of time lost. How was I mistaken! This hot weather came on me like a weight, and I, who had grown stout and tall with my pride of health in my summer travels, wilted down instantly, and was sick. You know my old resort when so caught. It is but to manage the coolest possible conveyance down to the Battery, and I am off. Accordingly, I was no sooner satisfied that the weather was actually hot, and no hoax, than I started. We found the Vanderbilt lying in her old place. It was already cool by anticipation as we went on board of her, and the familiar faces of her officers were pleasant to see, after we had traveled so many ways. The decks were broad and airy as of old, and, having been first assured of comfortable arrangements for the night, we selected a cool seat on the after deck, and were soon gliding along in the most glorious moonlight that your eye ever drank in.

I say it was soon ; for so delicious was the first breath of air, that we forgot time while we breathed it ; and I verily believe we should have sat all night in the self-same spot, had not a call to tea aroused us. We returned, after disposing of that business, to the after-deck, and the hours flew by with magical speed as we passed through the silver sea, reaching Stonington at a little after midnight.

Scarcely was I awake this morning, when I was met by a proposition to go to Fisher's Island to shoot plover. Without reflection, I accepted the invitation, and, having one of my guns down here, with all the necessary accoutrements, I went down to the wharf where the boat was waiting. The best shooting-ground on Fisher's Island is about seven miles from here, and, with the light breeze then blowing, the prospect of reaching it seemed distant. Nevertheless, we hoisted sail and drifted slowly out. In about ten minutes, however, a fresh breeze sprang up, and in half an hour we passed the light-boat on the middle ground, and in about ten minutes afterward found ourselves in a thick fog. At this instant the wind left us, and the ebb tide, running strongly out to sea, bade fair to carry us out to Block Island. To cap the climax, when we talked of anchoring, we were without anchor, that useful article having been somehow disposed of.

Do not ask me to relate the desperate exertions at the sweeps which were now made by my remarkably quiet friend, S——, and the rest of our party. Two hours of steady pulling across a strong tide, and partly

heading it, was not a very easy piece of work, and we were inexpressibly relieved at the first glimpse of land, which proved to be not very far from the point we wished to make. We had not been to Fisher's Island, and had no trouble with a load of plover, as we might have had in case we had reached the island.

Immediately after returning, I proceeded on a coasting expedition, being determined to make as much out of a foggy day as possible, and fancying a coasting voyage much safer under the circumstances. Accordingly, C—— and T—— and myself might have been seen looming up in the fog like giants, while, with spears and nets, we lifted into our boat such unsuspecting crabs (anglice "paddlers") as we could inveigle into our toils. We pushed our boat slowly along the flats, and took about three dozen fine large fellows in a short space of time. By this, it was nearly evening, and we came ashore. The fog lay thickly all around us, while above there was a blue tinge, which at the zenith was the clear, deep sky.

And now came with the twilight, thronging the busy brain, remembrances of good old times and September days ago, long, long ago, in the times which are always pleasant to remember; and as in my last I described to you the morning of a September day, so now was I reminded of a forenoon in that same season, which was impressed on my memory by a singular and startling incident.

Very beautifully had that morning broken, with blue, and gray, and crimson clouds, preceding the coming

of the sun. I saw it from a high peak of land, three miles to the eastward of the cabin, and no sunrise ever shed a holier light on the world. The stars sank back into the sky, one by one, until the full light came flooding up a mountain gorge, right down which, away in the distance, rose the great sun. The sky was below me, it seemed, on that horizon, and the sun was not on my level till he was nearly half an hour high. So it appeared to me, as I lay on a rock, wrapped in a blanket, waiting for the coming of day. I had slept in a hollow just below, and my fire was blazing brightly now, but I had nothing to cook on it. I was hungry and thirsty, but water was scarce on such high ground, and—a flock of wild pigeons were just then lighting in the top of a tree, which grew up from the gorge below, and was nearly on my level.

I sent a bullet into the tree at random, and as they rose, some fifty of them, I sent another into the fluttering flock, which dropped two, one torn to pieces by the ball, and the other in nearly as bad a condition. Scarcely had I fired a shot when I heard an answering sound, which I thought was an echo; but, as I received no reply to my second barrel, I supposed that I had roused some wanderer from a lonesome night's sleep. Such proved to be the case; for, as I went down the hill to pick up my pigeons, I met a man ascending, whose appearance was remarkable in the extreme. He was a tall, gaunt man, stout-limbed and large-featured, but with a forehead and eye that impressed themselves in one's memory. There was a pleasant smile in the lat-

ter, which seemed to be constantly combating a frown of melancholy on the former. At first you thought him a misanthrope, and immediately afterward he seemed the picture of good humor and fun. His first words were startling, for I had little expectation of hearing Greek in that part of the world, and especially at that time and place. But a happy memory of college days enabled me to understand that he was quoting the Greek Testament, and asking me what I had to eat. My reply was brief and intelligible. I pointed to the pigeons, and extracted a piece of jerked venison from my pocket. "Capital!" said he, in good English, and with a fine voice, "capital! I have a buck lying down in the valley, and between us we shall make a breakfast."

Nothing loth, I joined him, and found, as he had said, a fine young buck lying on the ground at the foot of the hill. He had shot it in the dusk of the evening previous, and carelessly left it lying without dressing it at all; and if the night had not been cool and dry, the game, to my taste at least, would have been spoiled. As it was, I laid him open, and soon took off enough of the hide to enable me to get at a piece of the haunch; and while I was engaged at that, the stranger sat picking the pigeon which was not torn to pieces.

I remember that breakfast most distinctly. We sat on a fallen tree, and watched our cookery. There was a steak broiling on some bright coals, while a heap of loose brush blazed up around a large piece of the haunch, and first smoked and then cooked it. The pig-

eon was broiling on a flat, thin piece of stone, which was one of our favorite and most artistic ways of cooking a small bird. The jerked venison was in condition to eat without cooking, but my new friend shaved a small quantity of it in very thin slices, and laid it on a stone near the fire, where it gradually shriveled up in little rolls, which, with salt, proved most palatable. Then we ate, and we drank water from a stream which trickled slowly through the leaves and grass at our feet. All those mountain gorges have streams of spring water gushing through them. It was eight o'clock when we finished our breakfast; and Leo, having watched us patiently to the end, finished up what we left.

It was a remarkable feature of our forest life that we had so little curiosity about the origin of men we met. It mattered nothing whether they were of higher or lower class. We met them, hunted, ate, and slept with them, and forgot them till we met again.

But somehow I fancied this man more of a character than I had yet seen in the woodland, and this not so much from what he said as from what he did. He talked but little, yet he ate in such a way, and managed his teeth and lips in such a peculiar fashion, that, while I could not describe it, I nevertheless knew it an evidence of his claim to rank and distinction.

You smile. Pray what claim is better? You possibly might imagine dress, or tone, or knowledge of the world, or some such thing. But I chose to judge from his eating. Nor was I mistaken.

We trudged up the ravine together, and Leo follow-

ed us. Willis was to meet me at noon in the Red Deer's Swamp, a spot which often served us as a rendezvous. Thither I accordingly went, and my friend accompanied me, our conversation turning on the forest and the game.

Passing down a little slope, covered thickly with underbrush, which was difficult to penetrate, my companion suddenly paused, and, assuming a tragic air, began to spout Shakspeare. Never was I so astonished. The truth flashed across me in an instant. He was insane! A pleasant fix, this! Alone in the forest with a man whose vagaries might at any moment prompt him to level his rifle at me. And the pleasantness was increased by the fact that he was pouring out Macbeth, and the whole dialogue, while he approached with alarming speed to the "lay on, Macduff," of which I fully expected a practical illustration. Suddenly, and to my terror, he paused, leaned forward, raised his rifle toward me, and presented me a most startling view down the muzzle. With my eyes fixed on him, at a distance of ten paces, I thought it possible to look him down. Neither of us spoke for ten seconds, when the flash came, and I stood unharméd; but a doe, which had strayed down toward us, and had caught his eye, and suspended his Shakspearian spouting, sprang by me with the blood streaming from her side. The blood was too plenty for a very bad wound, and I was quite too flurried to think of shooting. In fact, I was surprised to find myself alive. But, as she disappeared in the thicket below, we heard

the crack of a rifle which I recognized as Joe's. My astonishment may be imagined when my tall friend, who had not moved a foot, suddenly broke out precisely where he had left off, and continued his vociferous quotation. I stopped only long enough to look once into his face, then started on the run. His rifle was not loaded, and had but one barrel, and I was safe so far. The chances were in his favor among the bush, for length of legs was decidedly ahead of clearness of intellect. My only object was to reach Joe's comfortable presence. I don't believe the stranger saw me. He did not flinch a hair as he shot, nor as I started, and when I crossed the ridge I looked back, and he was standing in the same spot, and I caught the tones of his voice in the same style as before. For aught I know to the contrary, he is standing there yet, for I never saw him again.

But I heard his history. Black had picked it up, and when we reached the cabin that night, told it to us. It was a sorrowful tale of the crime and outlawry of a son, and the death of a gentle wife and daughter. I am persuaded that these lines may reach the eyes of some who are interested in his fate, and I spare them the pain of reciting his story. I believe he is living yet and hunting yet, for his passionate fondness of the chase clung to him after his mind wandered. I shall not soon forget the fright he gave me, though I have long ago forgiven him.

XXVI.

Pigeon Hunting.

September 16, 18—.

IT lacked yet an hour of daylight, but we had a long walk to reach our stands, and, although we were somewhat weary, and had had but a short night's rest, we were still bright enough and wide enough awake to know the value of time, and dressed ourselves with all the care which could be expected of men who had forgotten the necessity of matches, and dared not shoot their guns in a house for the sake of lighting a candle. The farm-house in which we had found very comfortable quarters lay in a hollow, and, as we had only reached it at nine o'clock the night before, on foot, through the hills, we had little idea of how the country lay around us. I remembered it fifteen years ago, but had not been there since, and might well be excused for my forgetfulness of roads, hills, and trees, especially in a dark morning, when I had but just awoke from a feather-bed-sleep. (The first sleep in feathers, by-the-way, that I have been guilty of in those fifteen years.)

As we stepped out in the starlight, we were surprised (as all are at the first glance) at seeing the winter constellations over our heads. The finger of Orion

pointed at the head of Taurus, and the bright star of the gipsies was in the zenith.

A walk of half or three quarters of an hour brought us to the hill, up which we toiled slowly and sleepily. For fifteen minutes neither of the three had opened his lips for any purpose but to gape, and we might be regarded, without any stretch of the imagination, as persons seeking, with a determined air, an opportunity of "inspecting the elephant."

I confess that I lacked the excitement of hunting. It was so long since I had shot any thing that has wings, that I had almost forgotten how to use my fowl-pie, and then the circumstances were all so different from my usual hunting expeditions, that I did not feel at all as if I were going out to shoot. At length, the top being reached, I threw myself on the ground under the lee of a rock, and waited daybreak.

The hill was a bold bluff, cleared on the summit, but wooded thickly to within a few rods of my position. The ridge was a quarter of a mile long, and we placed ourselves at equal distances along it, and, each one endeavoring to imagine himself warm, kept silence, and watched the east.

Did you ever happen to know a person who was in the habit of getting up early in the morning? I never did; I've heard a great deal about it, and suffered an immense deal in the way of submitting to disquisitions on the subject, but I never saw a living specimen of an early riser. If lying in bed late be a sin, as some would have it, then there's an end of all debate on the doc-

trine of total depravity. That sin is innate. No man was born to early rising. It is contrary to nature and comfort ; and a cup of coffee is so much better at nine than at six o'clock, that, if it be one of the inventions of the devil, as I have heard some late sleepers (but strenuous advocates of early rising) say, why—I must say it's an invention I'm especially fond of.

You never know that you are asleep until you are in that half-dreamy state that precedes total waking. Then is the time to enjoy the blessing of slumber, to worship old Somnus with the drooping eyelid and wayward, flitting, fairy fancies that he loves so well.

If there is an object in view, a steamer or a rail-car, a hunt, or even a book to read, or a letter to write, I am always ready to wake and rise. But that man who, for the mere sake of early rising, wears a pair of red eyes all day, and looks and talks as sleepily as if he had been up all night, is a martyr to a piece of folly I have no sympathy with. He doesn't know how deliciously pleasant it is to watch the sun-rays slowly creeping across the curtain, and look up at the wall, and think, and think, and think.

He doesn't know how merrily the pilgrim thoughts go through the mind, returning from the shrines of love, and glorious hope, and golden memory, toward which they traveled in the solemn night time, and before which they knelt and worshipped, offering the incense of truthful recollection ; he doesn't know of the calm thoughts after sleep, the holy reflections, the prayerful gratitude ; but, waking from his slumber, he starts up

as if ashamed of sleeping, and bowing, perhaps, but an instant, as a sort of duty, to thank God for a night's rest, plunges into the sunlight and the world, and deals with them until he sleeps again. Oh, there's a luxury between sleeping and waking! and that's the hour to pass in thanks and calm preparation for the day. There's no hour like it for communion with the pure, the holy, the beautiful—no hour like it for strengthening the soul. Who can say in what land it has been roving while the body rested, or what high converse it has held with the spiritual, the heavenly?

It's of no use to argue this point. I wouldn't exchange the hour I first pass after waking for any two in the day. It's the Sabbath hour of the day!

Pardon me: I had no intention of discussing this old story. What sent me off on this track? Ah! I remember. It was to explain a remark which H—— made a little while later.

I was lying at full length on the ground under the rock, covered by a branch of a chestnut tree which I had broken off to conceal me with, when the first faint rays of the day began to break through the blue east, slowly struggling with the stars, as if for mastery, until they triumphed. One by one the night-watchers sank into the sky, mournfully, it seemed to me, as if they liked not to leave their vigil. I have a fondness for that old fancy of the Arabians, that the stars are torches held in the hands of the dead while they keep the holy watch of affection over the desert. There was something touching in the promise of the Arab maiden when

she passed away with the evening wind, that, an hour later, she would be watching her lover from a throne above, and her torch should be well kept to light him toward her.

There was a cloud lying on the horizon. It grew lighter and lighter, and then became suddenly very black, and its upper edge was tinged with a deep red, fast changing to gold. I had not moved as yet from my position. The horizon was some thirty miles away, for the hill on which we were lying was far higher than any within that distance. At length a bright red flush suddenly covered the east, and the next instant a point of light gleamed in my eyes with overpowering brilliancy. At this moment I heard a faint halloo, and, starting up, saw H—— standing on a rock some sixty or eighty rods from me, pointing with one hand to the east, and with the other placed by the side of his mouth, while he shouted to me, in a tremendous voice, that barely reached me in the wind, "That's sunrise!" "Possible!" exclaimed I, and turned to examine it again. But the beauty and glory of the scene was gone. It was the sun, and nothing more. Yet, as I saw the other hill tops touched and tinged with the red rays, as they held up their heads to receive the morning kiss of the lord of the day, and then, as the white houses on the hill sides began to be lit up as the gleam of the sun traveled down into the hollows, I stood long and earnestly gazing, and thanked God for the full of sunlight that he pours over his apostate world.

But the pigeons! Oh yes, I was to tell of them.

“Where were the pigeons all this time,” did you ask? Really, my kind reader, I’d be obliged to you if you would not ask such troublesome questions. “Where were they?” Bless me, how should I know! I can tell you where they were not. On that hill where I lay coiled up, under a green chestnut bough for a coverlid, and a rock for a wind-breaker. How the northwester did whistle over the hill top! It was a glorious morning for a view, a grand morning for a ride, a beautiful morning for a walk, but a most miserable morning for pigeons.

Still the view was magnificent, and after a while I straitened myself up, and, unfolding the bends of my body, looked out at the prospect. We were about forty miles from New York, between the Hudson and the Sound. In the west and north were the Highlands, and in one place I caught a gleam of the water of the noble river away down in the south, under the Palisades. In the southeast, under the sun, and toward the right, I saw the hills that border on the Sound, and between me and them lay a long range of hills, some covered with forests, and others cleared and cultivated. But most of all my eyes turned northward toward the Highlands, and I remembered the years long gone. It saddens me somewhat to look toward the scenes of boyish pleasures in the days that are sepulchred and epitaphed.

The sudden flashes of thought from one subject to another are often startling to me, as I have before remarked to you; and yet there seems always to be

some sort of association, through which the mind glides rather than leaps; and I have often argued from this, that in the same way, perhaps, the mind at death would not start suddenly into a new and strange existence, but would, imperceptibly, as it were, pass from this into its future state, and not be astonished when it begun to try its new powers.

A moment before, I was watching a cloud on the northwestern horizon, and wondering if it was or was not a flight of pigeons. At the next instant I was thinking of the far past: my mind was in that old graveyard in the Highlands, where I have more friends than in any other place on earth. And then I was as suddenly off in far land, and thinking of the mournful voice of the delicate Mignon, as she looked up into Wilhelm Meister's face, and exclaimed, "*Kennst du das land? Kennst du es wohl?*" And then, thinking of Goëthe very naturally set me thinking of "Vaterland," and I caught myself humming over Korner's

"Wo ist des Sängers Vaterland?

Wo edler Geister Funken sprühten"—

I shall go up to the Highlands soon.

But those pigeons? My dear sir, why will you be everlastingly harping on that foolish question. Curiosity is a besetting sin of children, but you should be ashamed of it. You shall come at the pigeons just as soon as I did. We were very hungry at eight o'clock, and making our way down the hill toward a farm-house in the valley, we sent N—— to see if there were any

catables inside. A substantial breakfast rewarded his exertions, and we soon plunged into the forest and trudged slowly along. Noon found us seated by a farmer's table, evincing as good appetites as if we had had no breakfast, and our worthy host after dinner directed us to some of the interesting localities in the neighborhood. This house was the scene of a murder; that tree was where the murderer hung himself; yonder is where the victim is buried, and yonder where the *felo de se* sleeps the sleep he coveted. All very pleasant and curious, and we looked and walked on. At night we slept, and I did not dream, so weary was I. But the pigeons? My dear friend, I told you you should come at them just as soon as I did, and you have.

XXVII.

Along the Erie Rail-road.

June, 18—.

YOU will have lingered with me on the magnificent view presented from the end of the long pier at Piermont, and experienced a momentary regret that this new western route has taken you away from the old line along the lovely Hudson ; but, with a passing glance at the hills, made classic by the melancholy history of André, and an emotion of sorrow, which no American has ever failed to acknowledge in remembering his fate, you will soon forget the Hudson and André, and every thing else local and stationary, in gazing at the swiftly-changing scenery through which you are flying.

I have taken the old route by Piermont for the sake of a visit to a pleasant house in a valley not far from the river, which is the place of my present stay.

Seated in the broad, arm-chair-like seat, which you never saw on any rail-road, with eye glancing from mountain to river, from tree to field, you have already fallen in love with the route of travel you have commenced, and, as you dash under the side of an abrupt mountain, threatening you with its overhanging rocks,

you wish to stop among these rude but grand scenes, and the cars obey your will.

The station shall be nameless, since we may now speak of some things better left without a locality. In the corner of the valley, shaded on the east and south by lofty maples and two old elms, guarded on the north and west by the steep sides of the hill, you find one of those oldfashioned low cottages which you may have read of, more likely have dreamed of in your summer fancies, possibly have seen. Within five rods of the vine-covered piazza is a waterfall, where a mountain torrent pours down the hill side, and dashes from a rock fifteen feet high into a basin which has been carefully kept from the faulty hands of art. The very flowers growing on its banks are the spontaneous growth of the soil, and your foot is buried in the dewy or spray-covered leaves of the adder-tongue, as you approach the water to look at the large trout, which will soon learn to know you, if they do not already admit your right to approach as a friend of the family.

As you enter the heavy gate, swinging from a massive rock in the side of the hill, you have observed half a dozen pet deer, not startled by your entrance, but gazing rather pleasantly at you with their large round eyes, as if glad to welcome a stranger to their paradise; and it will be marvelous if you reach the door of the house without being startled at the familiarity of some of the pet birds, that have been now, for several years, the tenants of sundry nooks and trees in the grounds about the old place.

Such is the external appearance of this spot. Within, all is as beautiful, and gentle, and happy, and life here has leave to run along, with its rounds of duties and difficulties, prayers and sorrows, hopes and pains. Three persons call the cottage home. My friend the doctor (well known to you in some of our adventures by land and sea in past years), his lady wife, and his daughter. The tastes or dispositions of persons who have such a home need no comment, and the groaning shelves of the library in which I am writing afford the best evidence, if any were lacking, that such a place could only be the home of pure hearts, refined intellects, and gentle souls. To see them, you would think that life had been cheated out of its pains here, and that they had found a refuge from the ills that flesh inherits.

It need not be said that you would err. Two years ago, the valley was gladdened by other bright eyes, other fairy forms flitting among the trees and along the banks of the brook. Two blue-eyed girls used to be sung to sleep in the north room of the cottage by the waterfall, and I dare not say whether it was they or the birds that first woke the other in the mornings with their musical voices.

But the valley is not lonely, though they are gone ; and the brook has not lost its music, though they slumber so deeply near its bank as to need no lullaby ; and the birds sing as gayly in the morning, though they wake not, and will not wake, for music, or day-dawn, or mother's voice calling to prayer. I say the valley

is not lonely, though they are gone ; for there is a consciousness in all who are here that there is present an unseen influence, so gentle, subduing, and hallowing, that you grow into believing in a certain sort of spiritual manifestation ; and, shocked and disgusted as you may have been with the mad fancies of weak intellects, you can not fail to recognize here the evidence of spirit talking to spirit, in the silent power that God gives the blessed dead ; and you can not but believe that heaven is even nearer to you than it seems, when you look up at the blue sky, resting on the mountain peak above the cottage.

The doctor is unusually gay to-day, and, as a natural effect, the spirits of all the family are elevated. When he is silent and thoughtful, they are so ; but when he is as to-day, they are like him. It is a pleasant power, that of controlling, by one's own feelings, the feelings of others ; and an ambition one may be proud of, to win such affection as will be proved true by this never-failing test. So good are his spirits, that he devised a plan for committing murder, and I fancy that a clear evidence of his high state of feeling. Did you never observe that, when a man is gay and happy, he usually grows murderous in his disposition, and forthwith goes to killing fish, or birds, or deer, or something of the sort, according as his inclinations run ? Now, this morning, the doctor called me to help him kill a fox, which had destroyed a chicken in the night—a pet chicken of Ella's, too. I was lying half awake in the north room when he hallooed to me from the lawn,

"I say, Philip, will you wake up? It's five o'clock, and you're lazy. Come along, man, and help me kill a fox that has been poaching here."

"Where's your fox, doctor?" asked I, without moving.

"Gone up the mountain, I suppose. Come, come, my dear fellow, and bring the shot-gun with you that hangs on the side of your room. Take care of it, too, for it's loaded."

Slowly dressing, I had not donned my coat, when I saw from my window, on the surface of the pond, that which attracted my attention.

"Doctor, are any of your trout afflicted with diseased heads?"

"None that I know of; why do you ask?" said he, approaching my open window.

"I've heard such things of whales in the Pacific, and that the disease kept them along the surface of the water, with a protuberance looking like a rock. Sure nothing of that sort ails any of your fish?"

"To be sure not. What an idea!"

"Positive none of Ella's especial pets of the finny sort are afflicted that way, are you?"

"Nonsense!"

Crack! went the capital fowling-piece I held in my hand, and with the second barrel I took three inches out of the side of a mink, as he sprang out of the pond.

"There's your fox, doctor. Now, if you have no objection, I'll turn in again till a city man may, with some degree of propriety, be visible."

But sleeping was out of the question, for my gun had brought the whole household, and so we made the morning as pleasant as we could till the dew was gone from the leaves, and then Ella, and the doctor, and "madame the doctor" (as we style Mrs. ——), and Joe, and M——, and myself, took the mountain road on horseback, and, after three hours in the saddle, returned to a capital breakfast, to which the brook contributed a three-pounder in red and gold livery.

A week here, and then we are away along the railroad again.

XXVIII.

Chr Hill.

Orange County, June, 18—.

ABOUT four miles from the rock on which I now sit, with folio on my knee, is the Middletown station on the rail-road. Leaving the cars at that point, you drive, by a pleasant road, half through woods and half by pleasant farms, to the village on the cross-roads, which lies on the side of the hill on which I am. But the little village stands nearly a thousand feet above the level of tide-water, and the land slopes away by gentle gradations from the church door, twenty miles, to Newburgh. I can see all of Orange County between the Warwick and the Shawangunk on the south and north, and between the Hudson and the Delaware on the east and west, without moving from my present seat. You have never seen a richer or more beautiful view. It is like a picture set in a rugged frame, to be looked at and to be loved.

It is pleasant to make this one of the first of my sketches of summer travel, for it brings me back to old days, and I start like a boy going out into the world to see its wonders. Here parts of the pleasantest years of boyhood were passed; here Joe Willis and I have loitered away the summers and autumns of many a

year, long, long gone ; here—but I am too fast. Let us return to the view. The round hill top on which I now sit is in fine cultivation, and the fields near me are full of promise. To the east the view is bounded by the Fishkill Mountains, toward the base of which the lands of Orange County slope away from my very feet. To the south you have the same slope to the Warwick hills ; and to the west, in the distance, are the hills by the water-gap of the Delaware. North lies the Shawangunk chain, beautifully diversified to the very summits with farm and forest. But now for the more immediate locality.

Close by my side, fifty rods or so down the hill side, commanding nearly all of this same view, stands the parsonage house, whereof I shall have more to say soon, for there are pleasant and sad memories clustering there. Half way down the hill, toward the cross-roads, is an old well, the water of which is impregnated with iron, and which I shall also speak of. Then you have the village, some ten or twelve houses and the meeting-house, standing at the junction of six roads ; and on the suddenly descending hill side across the main road, with gate opening toward the church, is the old grave-yard, white with memorial stones. Here and there, over the forests that fill the valley to the north, you may see the smoke from farm-houses and cabins, while all around are the substantial homes and magnificent fields of the Orange County farmers.

Here, I have said, we—that is, Joe Willis and I—have passed many summers and many autumns. And

how happened it, say you? Because those that we loved were here; and in the little parsonage which gleams so pleasantly against its background of tall oaks and dark wood, there lived, in those pleasant days, one very dear to us, whose memory lives now with all these glorious scenes, but who will be with us among them no more, unless, in that blessed day of awakening, God do permit us to walk again the earth, now no longer weary, and find our heaven in the fields that are purer and greener, and by the waters that are deeper and more still in their ravishing beauty even than they were to the glad eyes of our childhood. I have told you that Joe Willis and I were bound together by many close ties in early years. Before I finish these sketches I may allude to others; but this alone is enough, and more than enough, to make us friends forever.

We shall neither of us forget that stormy night when M—— and he and I sat together, and watched the lightning flashing through a clouded world. How dream-like we all thought the beauty of the hills, and how unearthly the radiance of their summits when fringed with the golden gleams of the flashes! Even then she was dead, and we knew it not. That morning, a thousand miles away, in the state-room of a steamer, with the arms she loved best in all the world around her, she was passing away, and when the calm beauty of the day broke on the world, she had gone to her God. We buried her far from here, in one of the cemeteries near the great city, and Willis and I stood together by that grave, and remembered the parsonage

on the hill side, and the light that had gone from it forever. Peace, peace be with her!

And yonder, where the sunlight shows the distant mountains, blue and calm in the sky, there was (till lately) another grave that we watched, for almost a score of years, with faithful watch. Shall I speak of him? Young, ardent, and affectionate, he passed from our embraces in the morning of his years, when as yet the summer sun of life had not fallen oppressingly on him. It was thus that he died. Returning from his college, he was taken sick at a city half way home, and his reason grew clouded while he was most anxious to reach the arms that awaited him. A few days of fearful watching and waiting comprise the remainder of his story, to us full of thrilling incident, but to strange ears the same old story of humanity struggling with the enemy. He had heard the voice which called him away, and was waiting to go. He was a noble boy, of high hope, of brilliant intellect, of holy heart. The faith of his fathers had been strong in his soul, but clouds gathered around him now. At times his wandering intellect grew brilliant, and hope and wild ambition fought manfully with despair and death.

But the hour and the moment came, and, gathering its robes of memory about it, the spirit, shaking off the clay, entered the shadowy valley. There was silence in the room while darkness gathered over him, slowly thick darkness falling on his forehead, on his cheek, and on his eye, until, with a long, deep sigh, a slow, sad breath, his breast grew calm, the repose of death set-

tled on his countenance, and he went forth into that land where there is no gloom.

“ Never the night shuts in that country,
Nor cometh the gloaming gray,
But the day shines on forever
In that country far away.”

He was gone. The first who had left that magic circle around the hearth-stone had gone, and whither? Into what distant land, what far journeyings, what unknown gloom had he entered?

Thank God forever that our doubts were answered; for as we gazed on the sad features of the dead boy, there came suddenly across them a gleam, a glow, a dawn, a heaven of light, flushing his countenance with all the radiance of the blessed land. No feature changed, no motion indicated returning life, no quivering lips or eyelid betrayed the return and presence in the body of the spirit that had left it; but now, while the lips remained unstirred, and every muscle was calm in the statue-like rigidity of death, there came a voice, a sound as of an angel's song, issuing from those dead lips. Low and faint at first, it swelled into full notes of ravishing melody, but all the time distant, far away, like the sounds we hear in dreams, and the fancies of quiet Sabbath mornings.

Never on mortal ear fell sounds so holy. But still there was no motion of lips or features, no lifted hand, no finger pointing to the blue sky, no beckoning to the lonely ones he left to follow him, only that holy voice

of melody coming from the lips that had done with earthly sound. It died away, not in broken accents, nor sobs, nor feebleness, but clear as the sound of falling streams in Eden to the very last.

Call it what you will, we knew that it was by God's good pleasure that his spirit returned to tell us of the beautiful country into which it had escaped—"the far-away country, where is no night on land or sea."

The same gleam of heaven-light was on his features when we buried him. It was a sad, sad day as we filled his grave down yonder; and, many a year after that, standing on this high hill, we watched that grave in the distance. He is not there now. One pleasant morning, not many weeks ago, we came up to Newburgh and disturbed his repose. We lifted him gently; and, as we moved him, I remembered the April morning in the years long gone, when he was laid there, and I smiled sadly to myself as the form of the venerable clergyman again appeared before me, reciting the words,

"Unveil thy bosom, *faithful* tomb."

In this world there is nothing faithful, not even the grave.

We have laid him where *she* sleeps, in the forest shade of the great cemetery, and have left him to rest there. I drive by there frequently now, and I find it pleasant, after a day of toil, labor, weariness, and much wrangling and dispute, to look up at the grove of trees in which they sleep pleasantly and quietly, and to pass

on, dreaming pleasant dreams of the place where there is no more weariness.

But I have forgotten the place from which I am writing. Return with me now to the spot, and we will again look on the country.

Half way down the hill is a well, whereof I promised to write somewhat, but I will not pause there except to drink one draught of its pleasant water. Yet stop! Not far from it you will find a slab of slatestone, on which, years ago, I chiseled some rude characters, "*Hic jacet, &c.*," with a passage from Homer underneath, the substance of which is in praise of a good steed. The stone was chiseled to mark the grave of a horse, which for nearly thirty years had drawn the gig of the venerable pastor of the church. His home was that substantial farm-house in the valley, and this land was his. It is pleasant to remember that good old man, and I may venture to name him here, since he has gone to his reward. Methuselah Baldwin died in the year 1849, aged 83 years. He sleeps in the old grave-yard on the hill side, opposite the church, and in the resurrection he will awake among the fathers and sons, the mothers and daughters, the old and the young of a congregation to whom he ministered for more than fifty years. I remember, with many pleasant thoughts, the form and features of the old pastor, and one of the happiest associations connected with the old church on the hill is the recollection of his long white locks, his bowed head, his feeble voice—all contrasting with the freshness, and force, and purity of his devotion.

Well, well, I must not linger even here in the old church-yard, though I would fain pause a while at the grave of one who was once, like Joe and myself, young, strong, and hopeful. We are living, and he is gone. We are of the earth, and he is gone beyond the stars.

By my faith, I dare not stay here longer. If I remain, the flood of sad memories now gathering force will overpower me. The world has changed, Joe, since we were last here together, and we have changed; and the best comfort we have is, that the world we are going to has changed, so as to have assumed the likeness of the world we left years ago—our little world up in the Highlands here.

The night gathers around us. The forests down toward Montgomery are already lost in gloom, and the flush of evening has almost died out of the western sky. Half a dozen night-hawks are wheeling around my head, and I hear a whippoorwill on the roof of the old barn in the hollow. As the gloom deepens, you will hear the chirps of the insects grow louder in the woods; and at length the air will be cold and chilly, and the stars will twinkle with a lustre unusual except on such high land. We must leave the hill top, and in the morning we will return to the rail-road.

XXIX.

The Valley of the Delaware.

Cochecton, July, 18—.

YOU have recrossed the river, and are again in the State of New York, flying along by every variety of scenery, now looking at a mountain on whose side no trees find ground to cling to except a few stunted cedars, and now at another which appears to be a vast mound of green hemlock branches piled up to the sky, out of the summit of which a few tall, mast-like trees, in the leafless grandeur of old age, rear their solemn-looking forms, as calm as the sky to which they have so long been in close proximity ; now catching a glimpse of a dashing waterfall as some brook leaps gladly into the embrace of the lordly river, and now at the deep rush of the river along its rocky banks, bearing on, and on, and on, with one swift, deep, unchanging flow, seeking with determination (as the stout heart of a strong man might seek) an ocean in the unseen distance.

The scenery has been varied, but always grand ; rugged, but attractive. You see a huge rock, and are scarcely tempted to look a second time, but you catch sight of a stray ivy branch hanging over its rough form, and then a huge human face appears on the side, and you lean forward, startled at the view, but are already

half a mile away, and have only time to see, as you look back, that the rock overhangs a deep, shining basin of water, into which a brook is pouring its tiny flood, and you know there must be trout in its cool shade. Here is a solitary tree, leafless, and having but a dozen branches or so clustered at the top, a hundred feet from the ground. You scarcely begin to wonder about its age, and to fancy the scenes it has known of old, when you are again surprised into exclamation by the vision of a hill side, down which the track of the hurricane is marked by a row of fallen hemlocks lying in stately repose. It is vain to attempt a sketch of the scenes between our last place of rest and that at which I now write. You have, as I said, recrossed into New York ; and now, after flying over a broad tract of level bottom land, you will see a little white church gleaming out from among a small cluster of houses near a long bridge. The hills on either side of the river recede a little from the bank, making room for the two villages or hamlets of Damascus in Pennsylvania, and Cochection in New York.

To those who remember the old Newburgh and Cochection turnpike, this place will be known, but to few others. It was formerly reached by a ride of sixty miles from Newburgh, forty of which was a succession of mountain ascents and descents.

My first acquaintance with this beautiful valley commenced on this wise.

In those days when Joe Willis and I devoted most of our time to hunting, fishing, and similar sports, when

the white manse on the hill was our favorite home, and we made excursions thence into all the country round, our brother E—— was in the habit of sometimes leaving his own parish for a week or two, and traveling, with his carriage, over the hills of Wayne, Sullivan, and Ulster counties, seeking the destitute, to whom he might speak some of those blessed words of faith and hope, which are like springs in the desert, to many of the dwellers in the wilderness. It was pleasant for us to go with him, and many a long mile up the mountains, and many a long mile down the mountains, have we traveled together, now singing old songs, and often making the forest ring with some brave old psalm.

We would stop at a cabin sometimes, and eat of the plain food of the settler, seldom finding any thing but buckwheat flour, yet once in a while aided in making our meal by capital venison steaks, a broiled partridge, or a black-mouthed trout. Then, when we had eaten, E—— would speak a few words that never failed to attract attention; and sometimes, when they knew he was a clergyman, they would send for the neighbors for miles around, and gather them in the evening in some log schoolhouse or cabin; and I tell you there was never such worship in cathedral or minster as we had in the forest schoolhouse, lit by the moonlight streaming down through magnificent trees.

I say lit by the moonlight; for there was no other light except the flickering candle that stood near E——, and by whose light he read from his little pocket Bible words so sublime that they thrilled the hearts of his

rude hearers (unused to voices from heaven), and our hearts too, which were unused to such scenes.

At this moment I remember an interruption to one of those meetings, of which you will pardon me if I pause to speak.

The meeting was in a log schoolhouse, the benches were logs running along two sides of the cabin. The door opened at the one end, and the hewn table stood at the other end. The place was beautiful. Some day I mean to return there. It was about fifteen miles from here, on the bank of a dark but beautiful lake. The night was moony and bright, and the water slept as peacefully in the moonshine as if it loved it. It was cold withal, being in the month of November, and we were tired with a long tramp across the forest, having appointed to meet E—— at the outlet. When I reached the schoolhouse, I found a collection of men at the door, and on entering, found the seats on both sides of the cabin occupied by their wives and daughters. On the entering of some others, one of the men brought in a sawed board, and placed it with the ends resting on the benches, so as to form a bench across the cabin, on which half a dozen ladies sat, with their backs to the door. Leaning against the side of the hut, with my arms folded, I stood, as usual, peering into the dim light at the faces of the eager listeners, and admiring the earnestness with which they seemed to seize every syllable of the clear tones in which he spoke the word of life, when suddenly the board parted in the middle, and not less than six of the listeners were precipitated in a

heap on the floor in the centre of the cabin. I laughed: it's useless to deny it, or apologize. You would have laughed, had you been there. E——, always ready to enjoy a joke, yet always grave even to sternness when gravity is proper, even E—— was moved, and I fancied I saw (perhaps it was only fancy) a familiar twitching at the corner of his lip, which indicated his emotion.

But the group of listeners sat unmoved. A man quickly supplied a stump from the wood-pile wherewith to support the broken ends of the board, and in a moment the whole room was in profound silence, waiting for the word of hope and promise to continue.

But I have not spoken yet of Cohecton. It was in one of these excursions with E—— that we came out here. A number of highly-intelligent and respectable families reside in the valley, and, though some years ago they were in the deep forest, they are now close to New York, and have all the luxuries which daily communication with the city makes convenient. To Joe and myself, the attraction here used to be the isolation of the place, and its distance from civilization. The trout were plenty in the brooks, and the hills were fairly covered with deer.

I remember well, one morning, when the frost was on the grass, but the sky not yet clouded over for the storm which the old men prophesied—I remember, I say, the start for the hunt from the hill immediately above the rail-road station. There was Joe, and the doctor, and C——, and half a dozen others besides myself, and five magnificent dogs struggling to be away.

We proposed still hunting, and kept the dogs in leash. The day was gray on the summit of the eastern hills. The stars were clear as in winter nights, and the crisp grass cracked under our feet as we left the road and took to the cover.

Two miles from the river we approached the swamp, in the edges of which the deer usually found green grass and water so pleasantly mingled as to make a palatable breakfast. We divided here, and I took the old wood road, Joe turning to the left, and the doctor to the right.

I was watching the sky instead of the forest, and so glowing were the tints of the east, that I was aroused only by a shout from Joe, and looked down in time to see eight deer going over the ground at a splendid pace, about two gunshots off from me.

The run was crooked, and I started across the swamp, hoping to catch them before the next turn, or on it. Imagine my perplexity at plunging into a hole nearly up to my arms, and picture me, if you can, floundering through it, with rifle in the air, and both hands occupied in preserving that precious weapon from contact with the mud and water. I was out almost as soon as in it, but only in time to catch a glimpse of the last of the eight, as he cleared a pile of fallen timber, and dashed away toward the Callicoon.

An hour later I was striding leisurely homeward, having lost all the party, when I was startled by a loud yelp from Leo, whose voice I recognized. Suddenly, out of the swamp, and across an opening before me,

dashed a noble buck, with Leo on his heels. He was a long shot off from me, but I let him have it, and he tumbled in a heap, rolled over forward a complete somerset, and before he knew where he was Leo had hold of him. The deer was too much for the dog this time, however, for he sprang to his feet, shook off the teeth of the hound with a graceful plunge, and dashed away for the river. Ten minutes after, he took the water just above the rail-road station, and swam over, but was stopped on the opposite shore by a man who was working in a corn-field, with his rifle near him. When I reached the bank, he was hanging by his heels on a corner of the rail fence, at the point around which the river bends, and which you see from the car windows as you pass. I paddled over the river, and claimed the head and hide on behalf of Leo, who had brought him in, and a good cut of the haunch for myself, on account of a ball in the side, which had operated as a temporary stopper, but had no permanent effect.

Time would fail me to relate all the pleasant adventures on these hills. Such stories are for firesides in the winters of later years. Alas for the necessities of life, that chain us to the city! I am not sure that I could hit a barn-door, at a hundred yards, with my rifle now, and I should not shoot at a deer if I saw one, for very delight at seeing him. I smile at myself, seated here in the shade of a tree, with folio before me, and books around me, and fail to recognize myself as the same person who shared those sports; and as the cars go whistling and shrieking up and down the valley of

the Delaware, I fail to recognize the lordly river, or the beautiful valley where, in old times, the sunshine slept in quiet, and the winds grew calm and musical for love of all the beauty that was here.

It is a poor exchange, a pen for a rifle, and books for the grand old forests. But, such as it is, the weakness of the body requires the change, and needs must go when the devil drives. [*Memorandum.*—My friend ——— thinks all illness comes from the devil, and all health from the good Father.]

XXX.

Rust.

July, 18—.

PAUSE with me one moment here, my friend, and listen to a memory—listen to it, I say. Do you not hear it? To my ear it is in the whisper of the wind, the rustling of the trees, the fall of the stream down yonder in the glen. To me it is speaking in the clear and familiar tones of old times, full of music—that music which the grave has not power to hush, the earth not weight enough to keep down, time and change not strength sufficient to overpower. Again, and yet again, thank God for the holy voice of memory, which comes out of the past, out of the unseen world, out of the gloom of death, and tells of the glorious things that have been, and, in the same soft tones, whispers of the triumphant things that are to be; for memory and hope are closely allied, and the soul that remembers is verily miserable if it have no power to look forward.

Sit on this rock. The mountain wind is on your forehead, and you can not hear aught save the wind? Is it so? The stream goes bubbling down the glen, and you only hear the rushing water. The leaves rustle, and you hear only their whispering sound, but can distinguish no voice. Yet I can; and how is this?

I will tell you. Sit you here, and my voice shall be the interpreter in the rude phrases which men use to convey thoughts, and I will try to convey to you some idea of the story which the voices of all the beautiful things around speak to me, in those tones that reach none but a familiar ear.

We are on the brow of a hill some twenty miles from the rail-road, and below us lies a valley which, for beauty and quiet, is unsurpassed in all the world. Well might our friend B—— call his home *Rest*, for a calmer refuge from the world I know not; and here, for more than a score of years, he has found a pleasant repose. B—— had no children of his own, but adopted the orphan daughter of a distant relative, and brought her up as his own child, although without change of name. I may as well write her name here in full; for it is a melancholy fact, that, except the family of B——, there is not living one person in whose veins there is kindred blood to hers. But Effie Lee was known and loved by many young and many old hearts. She lacked no kindred by blood, for she bound herself to every one by the strongest ties of gentleness, and purity, and holy life. To say that she was a beautiful child would be saying very little, for she was more than beautiful. The dust of which she was made had been the blossoms of the violet, and forget-me-not, and lilies of the valley. At thirteen she was apparently seventeen, save only in the childish purity of her character; but at fifteen she seemed just fifteen, and as full of grace and gentleness as fifteen summers ought to be.

And now her life was like a dream of life, beautiful, and fresh, and joyful. And here be it remembered that the soul of Effie Lee was never disturbed by earthly love, and its impulses flowed out toward the Father of all in a calm and undeviating current. If there was ever a life that could, by its trustful, faithful, prayerful earnestness and humility, win an observer to follow in the footsteps of a worshipper in our most holy faith, hers was such ; and that child's prayers and songs are recorded in gleaming characters somewhere. Pray that you and I may be so blessed as to read them.

But some who read this will, perhaps, sneer at the character thus sketched. Let them sneer. She was one in ten thousand. But you err if you imagine that her life was necessarily a vigil and fast, or a dull, quiet rest at home, or a long succession of alms, and good deeds, and church-going, and the like. No, no. She failed nothing in her duty in all these things, but she was human as well as pure. She loved the mountains, the winds, every thing. She loved her horse, and never was one better worth loving. He was a noble animal, swift as the wind, and almost as graceful. No one rode him but Effie, and he knew her hand on the rein, and returned her affection by his careful delight when he carried her. Her father (so she called B——) had selected this magnificent animal for her three years previous to the time of which I write, and she loved the giver for the gift, and the gift for the giver. I have never seen a stronger attachment than subsisted between that father and child. For years and years

she had lain on his breast in the twilight of every evening, and found one and the same never-weary embrace there.

One brilliant autumn morning she had been away on her horse, alone, as she frequently went, and was coming down the mountain toward noon. She had a horror of the sports of the forest, and often endeavored to dissuade her friends from joining them. The old hunters all knew and revered her, and it was not an uncommon thing for her to rescue game from their hands or rifles by a simple look or a single word. So famed was she for this, that the utmost exertions were always made to bring the game down by a distant run, and so avoid the chance of meeting her.

This morning, however, the deer left the cover within two hundred yards of her, and dashed across the plain toward the lake. Without a moment's hesitation, she lifted her horse to the chase, probably with the idea that she might turn the deer from the run, and so save him from the rifle that was doubtless waiting him at the water's edge.

It was a gallant chase. She was close on the game, and her horse went along over the plain bottom land with a splendid stride. He was a rapid pacer, but she lifted him to a run, and he gained on the deer. The latter, frightened at the proximity of the horse and rider, who now led the hounds two hundred yards, dashed through a small patch of swamp, and doubled like a fox. She was close on him, and, by a dexterous touch of her rein, she headed him entirely. He was a

fine buck, and a proud one; and now, at bay, he paused a moment, and sprang against the breast of the noble horse. But the quick eye of the rider caught the movement, and the horse sprang forward and avoided the antlers of the mad deer. Again commenced the chase, as the game took the old run down to the lake. For nearly half a mile now they went along, deer, hounds, and horse almost together. Her loose, golden hair was streaming in the wind, shaken from its usual tight knot by the unaccustomed speed and excitement. About a hundred paces were between them and the river. The deer, still leading, passed the corner of a close hedge of swamp alder, when a rifle shot stopped him. He made one long leap into the air, and fell, while the horse, close on him, lifted over the falling game by the steady hand of the rider, cleared him at a flying leap, but struck his fore feet in the loose wet soil, filled with roots of trees, and fell headlong, throwing his rider heavily on the ground beyond.

All was over in an instant. The chase was ended suddenly and sadly enough. The game was dead. The horse was ruined, and lay on the ground unable to rise. The rider lay like a crushed flower, motionless and pale, and her heart had almost ceased to beat.

She was carried swiftly home, and, as they entered the house, the voice of her father, exclaiming in a tone of agony, reached her ears. She opened her eyes, smiled, reached out her hands, spoke, but what word they knew not (it was but one, and that most likely was "father"), and then she spoke no more, nor smiled

any more, nor stretched out her arms again for an embrace, nor looked ever again on the face of her father.

Long after that, one quiet summer evening, I found Joe Willis sitting on the rock where years ago she loved to sit, and I stole the scraps of paper on which he had been penciling. On the one scrap was a sketch of her head, life-like and serenely beautiful. He had always been proud of her, and she numbered Mr. Willis among her choicest friends. (Mark well, however, that there was no love between them, for she was a child to his years.)

On the other scrap of paper were these lines, to which he had already given the title "*From Heaven*," which they now bear.

OURANOTHEM.

Dear Effie Lee, thy memory
Is like the stars at night ;
Far, far away, but pure as they,
And just as full of light ;
And like that star, which gleams afar
With loving ray and soft,
Thy spirit, from its distant home,
Seems shining on me oft.

Sweet Effie Lee, sad, sad must be
That day for evermore,
When, tempest toss'd, in darkness lost,
She drifted from the shore ;
Our child, our darling, our delight,
Alone, as ne'er before,
In her frail boat, went floating out,
The unknown ocean o'er.

Once, mournfully, sweet Effie Lee
Call'd back ere she was gone ;
One tiny shout came ringing out,
And then we were alone ;
And then, far, far beyond that star,
Soft as the breath of even,
Or leaflets stirred by winds, we heard
The blessed sounds of heaven.

And sometimes now, soft, sweet, and low,
Upon that unknown strand,
The breaking sea's deep melody
We hear, and, hand in hand,
We think we see sweet Effie Lee
With holy angels stand ;
And like a dream, or starry gleam,
Her voice comes from that land.

Sweet Effie Lee, when thou and we
Together stand again,
Will thy sweet voice again rejoice
Our hearts with that old strain ?
In thy bright home beyond the gloom,
The sorrow, and the pain,
Wilt thou be press'd unto the breast
Where thou so oft hast lain ?

Dear Effie Lee, thy memory
Is like the stars at night ;
Far, far away, and pure as they,
And just as full of light ;
And like that star, which gleams afar
With soft and gentle glow,
Thy spirit, from its distant home,
Seems shining on me now.

Whether there be any beauty in Joe's fancy of that

fair child or not, there is more than I can tell you in the memory that haunts these hills ; and after long wandering, it is pleasant (how pleasant !) to return to the valley by the lake, and recall the beautiful vision that never disobeys our word.

Did I not tell you that I should find some such memories along the line of this road ? To-morrow I shall be lying in the broad arm-chair of the car-seat, and flying through the valley where I used to trudge wearily enough at about one mile an hour.

XXXI.

Up the Delaware.

July, 18—.

NOT more than half a dozen miles above Cochection, on the east bank of the Delaware still, you cross the mouth of the Callicoon, once a magnificent trout stream; and, I am told, in some of those deep holes that are unapproachable except by the footsteps of careful woodmen, familiar with the windings and plunges of the stream, some of these large old fellows still lie and fatten, as they used before the rail-road had turned a host of starving Irishmen to feed on the products of the brook, or almost as large a host of citizens to kill all the fish, great or small, that will take their hooks.

The Callicoon is a grand stream, and deservedly has immortality in the pleasant verse of Street, who is, perhaps, as familiar as any other living man, with all the favorite haunts of the trout in its changing bed. The characteristic of all the streams of Sullivan County is that, besides their swift rapids and abrupt plunges, contrasting with a deep, steady flow between shady banks, most of them are from one to two hundred feet below the level of the upland, and are running in deep dells or dark ravines, where the stranger would hesitate to venture. Such places the trout love, and I believe

I may safely affirm that no county in the state has as fine trout streams as Sullivan had ten years ago. But times are changed, and it was the only sad thing about the opening of this great road, that it exposed to the rude gaze of thousands, every week, those pleasant solitudes and haunts where we used to be monarchs of all we saw.

Ah! Joe—Joe Willis, you never will sit with me again on the bank of the Callicoon, and hear the rustling of the wind on the mountains, and sing the brave old songs that used to make the forests ring! And why? Because I shall never see the Callicoon again myself, except from the window of a rail-car as I fly through the valley, bound westward. I can not loiter here now as I did then, nor is there the welcome that we used to have; for the rail-road, while it has brought many into the forest, has carried our old friend Sim out of it, and placed him in the great city, where he sells lumber that was once the lordly forest we so loved.

Five miles farther brings us to a broad piece of bottom-land, rich with grain and hay, of which I will tell you a hunting-story as we pass swiftly by.

The river skirts the base of a mountain, sweeping in nearly a semicircle around a crescent-shaped piece of level land, which is again backed by a high hill covered with forest. The land within sight is the property of a friend with whom we used to pass considerable time, and his residence is in full view from the cars.

When the Erie road was at first projected and a track surveyed through this valley, a grade was commenced

and then abandoned for some years, until we began to hope it would be entirely forgotten and a new route settled on, which should leave its crowd of pleasure (and game) seekers elsewhere than on the Delaware. Up to that time the deer on the mountains had been abundant, and two of the best runs in all the valley were at the two extremities of the half-moon shaped farm I have described. Put out your dogs in New York, and they were sure to bring the deer down the steep run by the upper end, or through the gulley at the lower end, and as he crossed the river toward the shore on the Pennsylvania side, you had a fair opportunity to take him.

It was on the track of the road that the last deer which I shot in the Delaware country fell, and the contrast between this day and that was so great that I was led to mention it to M—— yesterday.

It was a cold, cloudy, and dismal morning. None of the exhilaration which you usually feel in clear autumn mornings helped our spirits, and we were half inclined to abandon hunting that day, when a stray gleam of sunshine fortunately tangled itself in the hemlock branches on the side of the hill long enough to be seen by us before it expired in the deep recesses of the forest. E—— was with us; and Joe and myself, with Sim for master of the hounds, formed the party. At eight o'clock I sent Sim out with the dogs in New York, and after he had been absent an hour or so, we took our stands, E—— at the lower run, Joe at the middle on the New York side, and I at the up-

per run. What degree of comfort Joe and E—— might have experienced, I am unable to say ; but for myself, I shall not soon forget the chilly dampness of the air, and scarcely more chilly dampness of the water, in which I stood two hours under a hazel bush, waiting for the deer. It was two hours before I heard the dogs, and they were then approaching by the upper run ; but while they were at least four miles away, a buck came down the run toward the water. He took it very leisurely, evidently hearing the dogs, and yet, apparently, not caring much, certainly not fearing any ; but as he reached the water's edge, he paused, and possibly caught sight of me crouching under the low bushes, for he wheeled with his fine head thrown up, and dashed off up the mountain side. It was a long shot, but I sent a bullet after him which broke a piece from a stone just behind him. A moment afterward he was out of sight ; but I knew he was going toward the lower run, which he would reach in a very few minutes.

A canoe was near, and I jumped into it, pushed off, and paddled down the river. Before I had passed half the distance, I saw him come out by the lower run, and take the water. He crossed, and E—— met him with a ball which went through his neck, and lay under the skin on the opposite side to that which it entered. He staggered and fell in the shoal water, but, gathering himself up, turned back for the east shore, where the dogs were now standing, watching him.

I was driving my canoe as swiftly as possible down the rapids. The deer was in the middle of the river,

twenty rods below me, and swimming faster than I paddled. I had but a moment for consideration, and determined to take to the shore. In a second, I sent the little canoe high and dry on the beach, and, springing out, ran down the rail-road grade, hidden from the river by dense bushes. I had not gone a hundred yards when the buck crossed the track before me, with both dogs on his heels, and I shot. What was the matter with my aim that day, I know not, but my ball missed every thing except the point of his hind leg, which it shattered. A deer moves about as well with one as with two hind legs, while the loss of a fore leg brings him down at the first leap. He passed on rapidly enough, but the dogs turned him, and he took the bank above the rail-road grade, where I gave him the last ball, and brought him tumbling through the bushes down to the rail-road track, almost at my feet. Here I drew my knife across his throat and he died.

The scene is changed now. That day, at noon, the clouds were breaking overhead, and a flood of sunshine poured down into the ravines. The river went along with majestic flow through the silent valley, and a calm, as if the place was a sanctuary, rested over all. Now the cars go screaming and whistling along the river banks, and, before you have an opportunity to recognize the valley, much less to look at familiar rocks and trees, you are miles away to the northward, and, while the memories which that glimpse has aroused are yet haunting your brain, you are on the shore of Lake Erie.

We are growing old fast—Joe Willis and I, and are not now the boys we were when that valley smiled around us, and the banks of the Delaware were our favorite places of rest. The strong river of life has borne us far on our travels, and the day and the hour is at hand when we must go forth, each one alone, to travel in unknown countries. *Go forth*, I say, for the prison of life is ready to break open at the visits of the angel, and the chains will drop off, and we will be at liberty.

We shall die. The dust of which we are part will reclaim its kindred, and, strong as the ties are that hold us here, we shall burst them all.

But sometimes I have thought it would be pleasant in the later hours, when the moment of departure is at hand, to rest a little while in those old haunts, and hear for a little while those dear old sounds. And there is no sadness nor sentimentality in such thoughts; for it would be pleasant to leave the world from one of its most beautiful hills, and I fancy one might go more quietly to his rest in such a place than amid the roar of a great city.

XXXII.

The Forest.

Valley of the Delaware, July 30, 18—.

I CAN not very well keep away from these old haunts. Years ago, long before the Erie rail-road was projected, and long before the first shovelful of dirt was thrown out on the bank of the Delaware, I used to wander on foot up and down these magnificent passes, and enjoy, with keen zest, the lonesome beauty of these lordly hills. Sometimes, when we were tired of the lazy life we then led, Joe Willis and myself would take to the old turnpike road from Newburgh, and, after a sixty-mile drive, would reach the bank of the Delaware at Cochection, and, leaving our horses in the stable of friends there, would enter the forest, rifle in hand, and penetrate to the cabin of some old friend, and pass a week with him in the sports which no other forests excelled. For trout, we used to think there was no stream equal to the Callicoon or the Willaweemock (and, in truth, the Willaweemock is to this day unrivaled); and for pickerel, the dark pike pond, twelve miles up in the Callicoon country, was and is unsurpassed; while the hills about Liberty, White Lake, and Kellum's were swarming with deer. One of our favorite places of resort was near White Lake, and I remem-

ber once catching a fine buck in the deep snows of an early winter, not far from Roosa's, and near the present hotel.

What changes the Erie road has wrought and is working! In the first place, the hosts of laborers on the road cleaned out the trout from the lower parts of the streams, and you could not raise a fin in the last three miles of the Callicoon. Then the rail-cars turned a tide of pin-hook and brown-thread fishermen through the valley, and the pike, out of disgust, I fancy, at being alighted by such adventurers, deserted all the accessible ponds; and then a large hotel here, and a water-tank there, and a screaming whistle, and a roaring, thundering train of cars, changed the solitary beauty of the scene.

And yet it was only changed—not harmed, for still I can find the old hills, and the old ravines, and the old streams, with the same old music; and although that exquisite brook with which I fell in love, and on whose bank I used to read *Undine*, and conjure up sprites and water-goddesses, does go quietly and demurely into a water-tank at its outlet, instead of rushing delightedly, as of old, into the embrace of the Delaware, yet (oh! enviable characteristic) I may, by tracing back its course, find the brook in its unchanging youth, with its same clear, laughing voice and sparkling countenance, and here, by its side, my forehead cool with its kisses, I am looking into the waterfall, where it dashes down the rocks, and writing this scrawl on the blank leaves that I tear out of the book I was reading.

The blank leaves are all torn out, and my paper is,

of course, nearly exhausted. I should have thought to bring a folded sheet between the leaves, and then—

I was interrupted curiously. The lady who sat near me was conversing with Joe Willis, and, having grown tired of holding a line which was in her hand, while the other end was in the water with a hook and a bait, she had quietly made it fast to the long ribbon of my broad-brim, wherewith I am accustomed to fasten the hat to my button-hole. How she came to bring the line without a rod, or who baited it for her, I am ignorant, the first information which I received being by the sudden start of my hat, and its plunge into the pool of water.

Rather astonished, and thinking some one had struck the hat from my head, I turned lazily around, but saw no one near enough for that, and now the hat seemed actually alive, for it was traveling down toward the outlet which led into another large pool below. The hat being Chinese, and of close, compact material, floated well, and I stationed myself at the outlet with a pole, with which I rescued it as it shot down, while the rest of the party, just awakening to the ludicrous nature of the occurrence, were shouting their laughter.

Imagine my astonishment at finding the line with a stout pull on the other end. Joe was at my side in a moment, and explained how the line came there. "What have you got, Philip?"

"A shark, Joe—only feel how he pulls."

"More like a young rhinoceros—I never felt a fish jerk that way."

"I say, Joe, whose line is this, yours or mine?"

"My old one. It will hold any thing."

"Then here goes for a pull at the old fellow," said I, and, shouldering the line, I walked up the bank, drawing the unknown monster after me, but he brought me up in a moment, and Willis uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Hold on hard, Philip," said he, and, stepping into the brook, he stooped and dexterously threw up on the bank a large snapping turtle! He would weigh at the least five pounds, perhaps ten, for I am not given to estimating the weight of turtles. A general exclamation of astonishment succeeded the landing of this novel sort of fish. He had taken the worm as naturally as a trout, and had hooked himself beyond escape. How to get the hook out of his mouth was the next question. Any approach was decidedly dangerous, and after amusing ourselves for a few minutes with the angry demonstrations of the captive, we cut the line as close as I dared venture my fingers to his mouth, and he waddled off with the hook, worm, and sinkers. I hope he may digest them. I don't know how the fellow had come to leave his hole in the mud for such clear water as this was, but he had probably been carried away in the current, and brought up at the foot of the fall.

So I returned to my paper, and have jotted down this small adventure on the blank leaf that was left, and on the last leaf of a letter.

I would like well to describe to you the beauty of this valley in which we are resting. The green mount-

ain sides surround it, and the lordly river comes into the arena with a bound over swift rapids, then pauses a moment, and flows out calmly and quietly to the next rapid below. So still and calm is the lower part of the basin, that you may see every tree on the hills reflected in the surface; and when the evening comes down, as every evening comes here, with the glowing of golden clouds, deep blue sky, waving forest, and shining stream, with the soft, hushing murmur of tree-tops, and the low voice of the brook among the trees in the ravine—when the twilight grows cool and gray toward the dark, and the air is rich, and life-giving, and glorious, we sit together, a merry, happy group, and tell stories of the old times, or sing songs, or sit in silence, and listen to the voices of the forest till midnight and sleepy time overtake us.

XXXIII.

A Panther.

August, 18—.

THE evening came on quietly, and with a cool, soft air stealing down from the mountains, that seemed to be life-giving and invigorating. The day's sport had been good. We had taken over a hundred trout, of which we had thrown back some eighty that were too small to suit our tastes when large ones were so plenty; and, retaining two dozen that weighed from a half pound to two pounds and a half each, we had returned to the hotel in the gloaming, and dined on the appetites and the trout which we brought home with us. I had shot a couple of woodcock, and those were specially dedicated to the breakfast of two of the ladies, who were convalescent invalids; and the landlord of this hostelry hath a cook who understands how to cook trout and woodcock, as I well know. So, having abundantly dined, we came, all of us, out to the piazza of the hotel, which overlooks the basin of the river, whereof I spoke in my last letter; and, having smoked a quiet cigar and hummed a quiet tune, Joe Willis, who had elevated his boots to the rail in front of him, suddenly broke the silence, and we were attentive to his story:

“Let me see. It must be twenty years ago—eight-

een hundred and thirty-two—yes, it was that fall that I was in this valley. I came down from Delhi—alone, through the forest and the bridle-paths, on foot, to this valley. I had crossed the Catskills, and had penetrated to Delhi, scarcely knowing what I was after. The autumn was pleasant, and I was in fine health and spirits, and with the rifle and rod I had fed myself tolerably well when I could not find shelter in the farm-houses. After passing the East Branch it was heavy work, and I slept two nights in the woods, with a cold, drizzling rain, soaking me, body and soul—yes, I was soaked to the very depths of my soul. It was awfully lonesome. I, who had roughed it with hunters in the wilds of Canada, who had slept forty nights on the sands of Edom, who had lived six months in South American forests, and six more in the swamps of Florida, was horribly lonesome and actually afraid to sleep out in the dark without a companion, and the reason was simply this: I had slept one night in a cabin near the East Branch, and all night long had heard strange sounds, distant, but inexpressibly mournful. I should have thought it a panther, but it was too sweet in its modulations, too much like the low notes of the *Æolian*, and I could not believe it had so rude an origin. I was almost sleepless that night, thinking of a thousand causes for that strange sound. The next night I was alone in the darkest forest, I think, that I had ever penetrated. Rolling myself in my blanket, with my feet to the coals of a glorious fire, I was fast falling into a sound sleep, when that same wail again sounded in my ears, with a weird,

clear, thrilling mournfulness, that started me to my feet. It was not within five miles of me, if it was an earthly voice at all, but I could not sleep, and as I walked up and down before the fire, the rain began to drizzle, and then to pour. I threw on fresh logs, but they blazed only with a fitful glare, and at length the rain conquered; the torrents that fell fairly extinguished the last spark, and left me in the blackness of darkness.

"I was on the east bank of the river. The forest came down to the very edge of the water; and, having given up all hope of rekindling my fire, I found my way to the side of the stream, and, with my blanket wrapped closely over my shoulders and head, sat down with my back to a large rock, and waited patiently for the dawn. I can not well give you an idea of the strange effect that those cries produced on me: all night long, now rising, now falling, now faint and broken, now clear, and full, and almost angry in their melody, they thrilled through and through me. I grew nervous, and feared to look around. I concluded, long before the daybreak, that it could not be the voice of any living being, and had exhausted all my philosophy to account for it as the voice of the wind among rocks or trees. I thought of all the ghost-stories I had heard, and of the Banshee, and the Arabian warnings, and the Indian death-songs, and all the prophetic sounds in legend or story; but the morning came, and my courage returned with the daylight, and grew marvelously bold with sunrise and a clear sky. So I trudged on down the valley, shot an occasional bird, and ate breakfast, lunch,

dinner, and supper with my usual appetite, and read half an hour by the firelight, until I fell asleep.

“I slept soundly for a couple of hours, when I dreamed one of those quaint dreams that often haunt me in forest sleep. Troops of old friends surrounded me, and followed each other out of my presence in rapid succession, until all were gone but one group—that group which is the dearest one in all memory. I thank God for dreams. I love to dream. They, the dear old faces, come back to me, the dear old voices again sound in my ears their familiar tones and words of love, and the dead have a blessed resurrection in my soul. So it was then; and with my head on a log, my feet to the blazing fire, the light of the blaze glancing through the dim forest, and lighting up its recesses, and filling them with fantastic forms, with the stars gazing down at me through the branches of the great trees, I lay and slept, while that dear company came around me, and I lived over again that scene, the happiest scene that has ever blessed my wandering, useless life.

“But a change came, and the sad part of that scene followed, as of old, the glad; and when it was all over, and I was alone—alone in the desolate old house, and the last dear one was gone, I dreamed that I was sitting in the library, and that a wail broke on the still air like the wail of a lost soul that looked into heaven, and saw its own loved one rejoicing there!

“I sprang to my feet before I was fairly awake. The same wail rang in my waking ears, and again and again, nearer and nearer, until I shook from head to foot with

terror. But a few moments' reflection sufficed to nerve me, and I now recognized the unmistakable cry of the panther. He was yet at a distance, and so continued. A thunder shower was approaching, and the lightning gleamed through the forest with wild but beautiful effect. I was again thoroughly soaked, but the fire was kept up, and I dozed away the remaining part of the night in fitful sleep.

"The next night found me approaching this valley, but it was dark before I reached it, and, much as I had gotten to dread it, I prepared for a third tiresome sleep. But this time I found a deserted log hut, and gladly entered it.

"I filled the hearth with wood, and kindled a great fire, and, laying myself down on the ground floor, slept gloriously. It could not have been far from midnight when the same cry awoke me. It was not comfortable to think of the scoundrel following me in this sort of way, but, as he seemed now to be near, I determined to end this business, if it were possible, and, looking to my rifle and knife, I listened to get his direction. The next cry seemed within a hundred yards, though it was probably half a mile away, but approaching. I accordingly left the cabin, and the door stood open while I concealed myself at fifty yards' distance.

"I had not waited above ten minutes when I saw a dark object stealing across the opening, near the river bank.

"The only question was whether he would find me out by his keen scent, or whether, as I hoped, the burn-

ed meat in the cabin would tempt him more, or spoil his scent. The scoundrel stole cautiously up to the cabin door, and entered. Quick as thought, I was behind him, and had dashed the door shut before I thought of the sashless window by its side. I sprang to it, and we met face to face. He was springing out when I gave him the muzzle of the rifle and its contents. But it did not stop him. He was through the window and on me, and I drew my knife as his heavy weight knocked me down, and we rolled over together. It was a fight of not ten seconds. At the end of that time, I was bleeding in a dozen places, but the panther was dead. I slept soundly that night, though I was sore, and the teeth and claws of the rascal had scratched me somewhat. But the wounds were not deep, and next morning I was here, and spent the next night in that house down stream yonder. It was the first frame house in this neighborhood. Who would have thought in those times to see the great western route of travel over my very route for those three days!"

Thus ended Joe Willis's story, and here endeth my letter.

XXXIV.

J u n i u s S m i t h.

August, 18—.

THE day had been a dull one—that is to say, the sky had been dull and cloudy, and the ground wet, or rather watery, while the rain poured in torrents from early morning to late sunset, and far into the night. A projected visit to a cavern and a mountain, a mile or two up stream, was, of course, vetoed, but we are never without resources for a rainy day, and we voted, *nam. con.*, that the day was pleasant, delightful, a perfect treat; and, accordingly, we made merry in the large parlor until dinner time. A group of idle villagers and two or three mountaineers were assembled in the bar-room, and, when I looked in at eleven o'clock, they appeared as stupid as bar-room groups generally do in rainy days, trying hard to be amused by old stories, told for the tenth time over; but an hour later, hearing the sounds of merriment from the parlor, one, and another, and another of the loungers came up to the door of the large parlor, and, with eyes wide open, looked in on the amusements of the strangers, which seemed to them as novel and curious as the presence of strangers would naturally be in this valley, hitherto so inaccessible.

I was standing near the window, looking out at the rushing river. Dark, wild, and furious was the flow of the torrent in the upper part of the basin, and the glassy pool, which last evening reflected the mountains and the sky so clearly, was now black and gloomy, and flecked with yellow foam. One of the ladies of our party, standing near me, was laughing at a remark of Joe Willis's, while a group of three or four were discussing the preparation of some tableaux and charades. At the moment, some person called out to me for a story, to kill time while the charades were in process of preparation, and, as I turned to reply to the call, I caught sight of a woodman standing outside the door, and looking in on the group with open countenance.

He was a tall, gaunt man, at least six feet two in height, and remarkably slender. He was leaning against the door-post, and his feet were a yard from it, so that he leaned like a rail in a slanting position, his shoulder against the casing, as if he meant either to hold it up or push it down. His long neck and head were inside the door, and his stare was expressive of vacant wonderment, and nothing else.

But there was life in his blue eye, and a devil lurking there, which you noticed the moment you saw him. It had already attracted the attention of Miss —, who sat alone near the window, looking steadily on the strange face that was so earnest in its gaze.

The instant I saw him I sprang forward: "Why, Joe — Joe Willis — here is Smith. Smith, my dear fellow, where did you come from? I thought you were under ground ten years ago!"

"Not so bad as that, sir—glad to see you, though. How do you do, sir? Glad enough to see you, 'pon my word, sir. I declare, Mr. Phillips, if I'd ha' known you was up here, I'd ha' been up last night. Queer times here nowadays. Who's all these folks?"

"Friends of mine, Smith; come in, and I'll introduce you."

"Guess I may as well—queer, too—han't spoke to a woman since I was a boy; but here goes. Trot 'em out, now."

And my old friend stalked into the parlor with an unstudied carelessness that would have made his fortune in a city assembly-room.

"Ladies, my old friend, Joshua Smith—I beg to present him to your favorable notice. He used to be the best shot on the river, the keenest hunter, the best-souled fellow, and the truest friend. I think I am safe in answering for him now as unchanged."

"Why, Mr. Phillips, you are presenting a perfect treasure," exclaimed Miss —, running up and seizing Joshua's hand kindly and cordially. But Joshua shook all over as the beautiful girl took his hand, and, blushing from his toes to his crown, a regular six-foot blush, backed fairly out of the door. But Miss — was not to be beaten in that way, and, by dint of bright eyes and winning ways, she coaxed him into a corner, and, while the rest relapsed into their former employments, she engaged him in conversation. Ten minutes might have passed, when a lull occurred, and Joe Willis took advantage of it to lift his hand and impose silence,

while he pointed toward the corner where Joshua sat, with his back to us, talking at the black eyes of his captor. So we listened.

"And you see, miss, I wa'n't going to be fooled, no how" (this was the first sentence we caught), "and so I crawled along the stream to where you see the tall hemlock that leans over the river. Just there I had seen a motion in the bushes, and I kind o' thought that a painter was in there, but I wa'n't sure. I sneaked up among the bush, and looked into the cover, but I couldn't see nothing, so I laid down flat, and dragged myself, snake fashion, into the hollow over the other side there. You can see a maple just above it, out there. Well, I hadn't gone ten yards, when I heerd a kind of a snarl and a kind of a yowl, and there we was—a gray wolf, one of the regular sort, with a young one alongside of her. Wasn't I skeered? I reckon I was, some. I was skeered all over; but was worse in my legs than any where else, for they was caught in a bunch of briers, and I couldn't stir 'em without scratching horrid bad. But it was scratch head or scratch legs then, I tell you; and I left my trowser-legs in the bushes when I jumped at her. She was a little too soon for me, though, and I felt her teeth going through and through the gristle about my elbow; so, as you may suppose, I had only one arm left for much use, but I was working thundering hard with that. I'd dropped my rifle at the start, and I had to trust to the knife or nothing. So we went at it. I don't know how I managed the next two minutes. We rolled over and over

on the ground, and I never felt the touch of her teeth, though her claws made some rags out of my coat. But I was nigh giving on it up, and as it wa'n't no use to cry enough, I was thinking of knocking under and letting her chaw me, when Mr. Willis and Mr. Phillips come tearing down through the brush, and I felt strong again the minute I seen them. It was a mighty close shot, too, for I felt the wind of the ball. I was lying on this side, stretched out kind o' so (and he illustrated here by a queer twist of his long body), and I had the wolf by the throat with my right hand, and I was trying to get on to her with my body, but she was pulling and hauling like sin, and making the feathers fly out of me at every scratch, when Mr. Phillips shot right over my head. You see he wa'n't more'n ten yards off, but it was such a rough and tumble fight that he hadn't no business risking such a shot as that. What if he'd a hit me then? 'Twould ha' blowed my brains out certain."

"But, Mr. Smith, if he had not shot the wolf, the wolf would have 'chawed' you."

"Chawed? That sounds kind o' queer. Don't know as I ever heerd a woman say 'chaw' before. No, ma'am; for he didn't hit the wolf at all. The bullet went into the ground ten foot off. 'Twa'n't the thing, that shot, no how."

"Yes, but it was, though, Joshua, for it scared you and the wolf ten feet apart from each other in the next second."

"Oh, you're a listening, are you? Well, listeners don't hear no good of themselves. Scare me and the wolf!

Didn't scare neither of us. Too good pluck in us. We only backed off for breath and another round."

"Likely story! Perhaps you recollect your left arm was in a bad fix, and I think the wolf knew it, by the way she licked her lips, and worked at you for about ten seconds; and your knife, old fellow—how happened your knife down in the hollow, two rods off?"

"I'd throw'd the knife away for a fair fight—yes, I had. My blood was up, and I was—"

"Come, come, Joshua, my boy, if the next ball had not bothered the wolf, and Joe Willis's knife and good stout arm taken the fight off your hands, I'd like to know what chance you think there would have been that you would bless your eyes to-day with looking at that face of Miss ——, eh, Joshua?"

"Wall," said Joshua, stretching his long legs till his heels, buried in the carpet, seemed half way across the room, and looking around at me with a quizzical expression, "wall, I don't know. Some things are blessings to some folks that ain't blessings to others."

"Why, Mr. Smith!" exclaimed the lady.

"No offense, ma'am. It does me good to look at you: I hain't seen sich sence—sence—Do you know, now, I had my bringing up down East? I only came out here when I was about two thirds growed. It is pleasant, anyhow, to see you."

"But the wolf, Mr. Smith?"

"Ask Mr. Phillips; he's took the story out of my mouth;" and Joshua was unapproachable after that, listening, but silent. So I finished his history.

"Willis and myself were just in time. Smith was fighting well, but the wolf had hurt his arm, and, in his eagerness for a choking grasp, he had forgotten to hold his knife, dropped it, and they had rolled far out of reach of it. I think half a second would have settled Joshua; so I shot, intending only to frighten the wolf from the deliberate mouthful on Joshua's shoulder which seemed inevitable, and it effected the purpose. They separated for an instant, and I gave her the second ball inside the shoulder, hoping to reach the heart. It was a little out of the way—too close for good aim; but the ball did service, and disabled one leg. Then Willis was on her with his knife before she had recovered from the stunning effect of the bullet, and Joe had always a knack of putting a knife in the right place.

"Joshua didn't use his left arm for a week or two after that. How long was it, Joshua?"

"Six months," grunted Smith.

The attentive group of listeners were scattered at this instant by the dinner-bell, and, insisting on Joshua's company, we made merry till twilight over the table.

The clouds were broken and heavy before dark, but only to indicate a furious wind among them. In the night we heard it, roaring along the mountain sides, wailing down the ravine, and among the pines and hemlocks, and shaking the very foundations of the house. But we slept gloriously, for all that; and I confess that, to myself, it sounded as I have seldom heard wind sound, like the familiar voices of other and freer days,

and I could shut my eyes and imagine the years gone back on the track of time ; I heard the same tempest in the same ravine, with the same trees talking to the wind, as in the olden time ; but the long, shrill whistle of the express train coming up the valley woke me from my revery, and I knew that a mattress was not a bearskin, and white plaster and dimity hangings were not the cabin logs and the trophies of the chase that used to adorn them in the cabin of Joshua Smith, the only house in the valley in the days when we knew it first.

But it is a glorious valley yet, as you will say when I tempt you to come up here.

XXXV.

Ch r B r d M e n.

Susquehanna, August, 18—.

THE valley of the Delaware and that of the Susquehanna abound in material for poetry and romance, and in stirring traditions of old times. The favorite haunts of powerful tribes of Indians, they were the scenes of many events, unrecorded by the hand of man, unwritten in books, unknown to song, but some of which live in the fireside stories of old settlers or the cabin tales of hunters.

Not unfrequently we have listened to such histories as the rude taste of the forester had preserved for repetition, out of the many that he had heard, when the long day's hunt was over, and we sat at evening by blazing piles of logs, or by the broad hearth of the log hut.

They were a lordly race, and I love their memories. I would fain preserve many of these traditions for future times to admire, but I am powerless. Would that some pen might be found worthy and skillful to record the stories of the red man's life, love, struggles, victories, defeats, and death. We are apt to remember them only as savages, and to class them in our thoughts with the wild beasts that inhabited our forests, instead of regarding them as living, loving men and women, of

like passions with ourselves, who were born, struggled and perished even as we, and who alike suffered such trials, such pains, and such despairs, and enjoyed such affections, hopes, and joys as have we.

The presence of the red man's grave invests any soil with deep interest to my mind, and the fact that he lived in these forests adds tenfold to the pleasure with which I pass through them.

About fifteen miles from this place, among the hills to the southeast, is a deep valley, or rather a basin, surrounded by lofty and abrupt mountains. The place is a curious one, and should you, in hunting, come out on one of the summits of the inclosing hills on the north or west (for you would never approach it except on foot, and on some such expedition), you would suppose it to be almost inaccessible, so steep are the hill sides, and so abrupt the rocky precipices, which appear to succeed one another like a series of lofty steps. But there are two or three ways of descending to it, and, on reaching the bottom, you find that there is an opening to the southeast—a gorge in the hills, through which pours a stream, the outlet of a deep pool that is in the centre of the basin. This pool is of remarkably clear water, and near the edges you may see the sandy bottom very clearly; but in the inside it is dark, and said to be fathomless. It is “said to be.” The authority is like that for very many other things which we repeat with an *on dit*. There was never a boat on the pond, and I doubt whether any one ever attempted to fathom the depth. But the first time I saw it I was

with Joshua Smith, and he sat down on a log, and told me, in his queer, quaint way, the story which I am about to repeat to you. The authority for it is tradition. Joshua heard it when he was a boy from Billy Steenson, who died of the bite of a rattlesnake forty years ago. Where Billy had heard it no one knows, except by his own story, which was, that the Indians used to talk about it often, and that he was present at some of their ceremonials in memory of it. But for the story.

It was in the olden time—in the days long gone. The centuries that have passed since then are marked by the lordly Delaware in lines on its rocky banks, or by the circles in the forest oaks, but nowhere else. In those same centuries men were fighting for the mastery in Europe, the fires of the Reformation were lighting the hills of Germany and England, successive dynasties were placed on and hurled from old thrones, the Rhine, and the Danube, and the Tiber were rolling along their rich and peopled shores, and the deep sea was between the civilized world and the American red man. Once, indeed, a few lonesome ships had drifted across the world, and made communication between those who had been separated for thousands of years. But the tribes that thronged the country from the Mohegan to the great lakes knew nothing of all this, and to them the succession of day and night, summer and winter, peace and war, life and death, was unrecorded, except in the recollections of men. It was when the war-cry of the Crusaders was floating over the walls of Jerusa-

lem, or when Luther was thundering his denunciations in the ears of his startled hearers, or when Anne Boleyn was dying, or when—but what matters the date? It was long ago, and that is date of a tradition sufficiently accurate.

The Indians in this neighborhood were a race of warriors, and had pressed their way hither from Eastern countries. Possibly they were near relatives of the Pequots or the Narragansets; but, having earned their title to the soil by hard battles, they were left to keep it by force of arms, and their plantations on the banks of the Susquehanna were the scene of many frays, brief but terrible. At length, the Western nations united to force back the invaders who had held the soil for so long a period of usurpation, and advanced with thousands of fighting men toward the narrow neck which separates the Susquehanna from the Delaware. Here, among the mountain fastnesses, that afford ample retreat or defense to armies of millions, the invaders, forewarned and forearmed, were awaiting the enemy.

There was no march of armies, no trampling of war-horses, nor any sound that might have told of the presence and advance of an army of men. They passed like ghosts through the forest pathways, and glided, spectre-like, from cover to cover, from glen to glen, now climbing, with cat-like rapidity, the sides of some lofty mountain, now threading, with unerring speed, the mazes of some dense forest. The one who saw them from some point of bird's-eye vision might have been pardoned for mistaking them for an "army of phantoms."

But the wolves that were following on their track were no ghosts. Their long, gray forms, their fierce and angry voices, their eager impetuosity, all evinced that they knew the reality of the army they followed, and were accustomed to be led by them to feast on the valiant.

Night came down, with the glory of all the stars, on the Susquehanna and the Sterucca. Again I must pause to think of those immutable watchers, and to reflect on the scenes they have witnessed.

That same silver-eyed star that looks into my window at this moment beheld the scene I am now describing with the same calm smile. What witness-bearers, in the day of reckoning, will they be!

On the east bank of the Sterucca, near the Hemlock Brook, the invaders were stationed, and lay waiting the battle. At length it came. It was a night attack, fierce, furious, and bloody, and the forest rang to the yells of the mad combatants. Here a heavy blow sent down a stout old man; there a swift arrow pierced a young man's heart. Here the exulting war-cry rang out in a clear, triumphant tone; there it bubbled out in an agony of blood. Here, hand to hand, a hundred fought a thousand; and there, in the deep recesses of the forest, single couples clinched each other in furious battle. Now the silence was fearful, broken only by the crushing blow of a hatchet penetrating a cloven skull, or the dull, heavy fall of a dead man to the ground; and now the shrieks and yells that filled the night air were like the cries of the damned in some infernal torture.

Slowly the battle wore on and changed place. Mile after mile, in the long night, the invaders retreated, contesting every hill and valley, but hard pressed by an overwhelming force, until they reached the brow of the hill on the west side of the basin that I have described, and here they lit the signal fires that were prepared to announce defeat, and provide succor and re-enforcement. From hill to hill, from mountain to mountain, the beacons flashed, until, on the distant banks of the Mohegan, long ere the daybreak, the story of defeat was read in the blaze of the signal fires.

But succor came too late. The vengeance of the red man might at times be tardy, but was always sure; and when the morning sun shone on the smoke of the beacon that told the sad story to the watchers in the glen, a handful of strong men, step by step, were fighting their retreat into the valley where the women and children were ready for flight. But the hour of mercy was past, and when at length the scanty few entered the inclosure where the defenseless families were waiting them, a thousand foes, tenfold more fierce and blood-thirsty than the wolves that were on their track, entered with them, and a wail of despair arose to heaven that might almost have moved an army of angels to the rescue.

Matron nor maid, boyhood nor blooming girlhood, youth, beauty, innocence, naught might escape, and one by one they were hewn down like sheep, and as each fell, one wail less was heard, and one less, and so it grew to be more silent till the sobbing death-moans of

a mother, clasping her dead boy to her cloven breast (that holiest tie to life that is always the last to part), was the only sound that disturbed the air, and the sunshine fell calmly and peacefully on the repose of the slain.

Then followed the exulting feast of the victors, and all day long they published to the forest and the sunlight their joy and triumph, and the dead lay unheeded in the places where they had fallen. But when the twilight came down on the mountain country, and the feast was ended, a small cloud appeared in the west, rising above the lofty hills. It gathered blackness, and advanced solemnly, steadily, until it assumed an appearance that awed even the men accustomed to the thunder of these mountains. They gathered in a dense group in the centre of the captured village, and waited the approach of the tempest in hesitating silence.

And now a prodigy occurred—a frightful scene; for a young maiden, a tall and queenly girl, who lay, all day, dead across the door-way of the royal lodge, rose from the ground. Her face was strangely pale, and the blood from her torn head ran down among her long black locks and across her features. But there was a wild, strange beauty and majesty in her look, as she stalked into the centre of the awe-struck victors, and spoke in a clear voice, piercing, but musical. She cursed them with the curses of the good and evil spirit, with all the maledictions of an obliterated tribe, and all the hatred of a conquered race. She cursed them in the forest and in the village, in their children and their

brethren, their homes and hunting-grounds, and even in their graves ; and when she had ended, she lay down dead on the greensward, pale, calm, but beautiful, and the tempest burst upon them.

There was no storm like that, before or since, among those mountains. The lightning flashes fell among them, making terrible havoc, and the torrents which poured down the mountain sides filled up the valley, and drowned them as they struggled to fly. Out of more than a thousand men, less than a hundred escaped, and the remainder lay in the deep lake that filled the hollow.

Next day the lake burst the eastern barrier, and wore its own passage down toward the Delaware, and after a few weeks the hollow was dry, with only the deep pool in its centre. Long after that, even to these later years, the ghostly forms of the slayers and the slain might be seen flitting about the edges of the pool in the moonlight.

Far down in its unfathomed depths, in adamantine sarcophagi, the bodies of the victors in that battle are preserved, and they are thus forever shut out of the blessed grounds. But the maiden that cursed them is a queen in the land of her present abiding, and a crown of diamonds conceals the wounds on her queenly head.

The legend is written ; would that it and all similar traditions of our predecessors here might have a better preservation.

XXXVI.

Rail-road Rumors.

August, 18—.

YESTERDAY we met friends who had been traveling on other routes, so that our party formed quite a large group in the rear of the car, and when the interest in the scenery began to flag, we killed time by exchanging stories, as you well know our wont has been hitherto. But the best story of the day, by far, was that of B——, who vouches for its authenticity, and the truthfulness of the incidents. It occurred within two hundred miles of Albany, on one of the greatest railroad routes, and I may safely assure you of its credibility. I can best relate the story in the words of my friend, as follows:

“I was tired, half sick, and wanting something to arouse me. The ride had been tedious, and I was ready for any change, when the cars entered that beautiful valley on the banks of the M——, where a mountain gorge opens out suddenly on the plain near the station.

“I had studied all the passengers, and found none to interest me. A group of children, surrounding their mother in the next seats to me, had attracted the chief part of my notice, and I had sought to trace in the mother's face some indication of her character and thoughts,

but in vain. She was a fine-looking person, of forty or forty-five, matronly and dignified, but with all the air of the city, and that expressionless look, void of interest and uninterested in any passing object, which characterizes the fashionable traveler. Occasionally she dipped into the pages of a novel; sometimes drew out a diamond-studded watch of most minute proportions; now looked at the mountains, and now at the seats in the cars, and now at the faces of the children, but always with the cold, expressionless gaze of the 'high-bred lady.' I had given her up for quite as unworthy regarding as most of her class are usually, and had concluded to look outside the car for amusement, when we brought up with a plunge and a jerk at the little station of —— for wood and water. Within a hundred feet of us the mountain gorge opened, and the sunshine stole down it with strange beauty. At this instant, a man approached the window at which I sat, offering to sell fruit from his basket.

"He was a tall man, with flowing hair and beard, originally jet black, but now streaked a very little with gray. His face was magnificent. I would have gone miles to look on such a countenance. His forehead was high, broad, and white. A strange calm, even majestic, seemed to rest on it, and to rule his appearance. His eye was dark, keen, but not roving or restless. It appeared to repose wherever it fell. His lips were carved with exceeding beauty and sweetness, and his complexion was unrivaled for whiteness. His beard, as I said, was long, flowing, and elegant, and

dark, but now changing here and there, as a long white hair was seen gleaming among the masses of black. You have seen such faces in old paintings. I remember one like it, that I can not now locate, but you may recognize it by my description.

"It was strange to see such a man engaged in such a humble employment, and I bought a dozen articles in succession, to keep him before me while I looked at him. At length, the lady I have mentioned beckoned him toward the window where she sat, and he left me, but I followed him with my eyes. As he approached her he lifted his basket, and she examined the fruit, but I saw a strange expression coming over his countenance. He gazed with unspeakable earnestness into her eyes, and at length I knew by his look that the gaze was returned, and I looked at her. A deep crimson was flushing over her face, the first sign of feeling I had yet seen on it. For a long while that gaze continued, he looking calmly, sadly, with unutterable mournfulness on her now lustrous eyes, and then he spoke one single word, but in a voice of deep emotion, 'Mary!' and let his basket fall, the ripe fruit rolling along the platform and under the wheels of the cars, and, bowing his head low down, he turned away, and stalked up the gorge of the mountain. He did not once look back, nor turn, nor hesitate, but pursued his way with a swift, steady pace up the ravine, and disappeared among the trees that overhung the stream.

"Here was an incident worth tracing out. It was none of my business, to be sure, but what was I travel-

ing for, if I was only to attend to my own business. I had left my office for the sake of getting rid of my business, and having a finger in any that would amuse me, without giving me care or responsibility.

"I sprang from my seat as the engine whistled. The baggage was checked, and would take care of itself. I was alone. So, as the cars dashed westward out of the valley, I was already following the footsteps of the stranger up the gorge, which was so narrow that I knew there was no danger of missing him.

"My determination was so sudden that I had formed no plan of action, only resolving to know more of this curious incident, and the actors in it. At length I emerged from the wood road in a little open spot, surrounded by hills, with a beautiful southern exposure, which seemed to be a sort of small Eden. It was filled with fruit-trees, and a luxuriant garden, and all the beauties and delicacies of a tasteful cottage home. A small hut stood under the shadow of a few lofty trees, with a bubbling spring in the midst of the green grass before the door. The sky seemed to love that little spot, and bent over it all around, and very near to it. The sun never penetrated those shades in summer, and the hills kept off the winds in winter. I paused to admire the beauty of the scene a moment, and then knocked at the door. A clear, distinct voice bade me enter, and I obeyed.

"Seated in a large chair, with his elbow resting on a rude table, and his eyes shaded by his hand, sat the strange fruit-dealer. The furniture was rude, but ele-

gant in its rudeness. The walls were ornamented with paintings of startling force and beauty. I was surprised, and, I confess it, embarrassed, but I was in for a story, and I sat down with some trifling phrase of civility. A few words sufficed to explain that I was a traveler, hunting scenery, accidentally led to that spot. But it was *no go*. He remembered me, and in five minutes he made me confess the truth, that I had seen the rail-road incident, and wanted an explanation.

“‘Well, I like that,’ said he. ‘It was cool and bold; and I have not gotten over my love for adventure yet, though I am growing old, and am a hermit, and am called a fool. You have made a bold push for a story, and you shall have it. But sit down and eat first, for it is dinner-time hereabouts.’

“In five minutes we were at a table covered with fruits, bread, and milk in abundance, and we dined heartily. When we had finished, and he had made me light my cigar, he rose, crossed the room to a large chest, and took out from it a large-sized miniature-case, or perhaps I should call it a small-sized cabinet picture. Placing it before me so that the light of the single window at my back fell on it with a beautiful effect, he bade me look well at it before he commenced his story. It was the portrait of a young and beautiful woman, of noble appearance. It might have been a painter’s fancy of Helen, for she wore no dress of modern times. I was struck with the eyes, they were so full of life, and frolic, and gayety. After I had looked my fill, he restored it to its place.

“‘I loved her, and I lost her—that is my story, briefly and fully—the old story. She was the daughter of a wealthy house, I the poor artist. Month after month, year after year, I had grown rich in the outpouring sunshine of her eyes. I was admitted, favored, petted; and was it strange that I was fool enough to believe I was loved? There were times when I had reason to think so. But I will not blame her—I never have blamed her. She was good, noble, beautiful; but she was in, and she was of, the world, and schooled in all its lessons of what was proper and what was most desirable. It was not her fault that they made her soul so cold in a body so fitted to be loved. It was once different. In gay childhood, nay, in later years, she had a wealth of pure, warm feeling in her heart, and sometimes it gushed out. But, year after year, it was repressed, till she had command over it; and I sometimes think it was best so. She never loved me. I thought she did, but I was wrong; and when the truth came in on me with blinding force, it made me mad. That love had been my life. You lawyers, who deal in constant excitement in the passions of other men, and all whose lives are among men, know nothing of the life of the artist. Solitary and alone, from sunrise to sunset, he studies his own soul and its treasured images. One exquisite scene, one beautiful thought lives for years in his brain, and is his mental food, until it is exhausted, or until another takes its place; and when that one is so beloved that he neither looks for nor desires another, then it becomes a part of his soul, his

very being. It lends color to his imagination, it guides his pencil, it pervades his work. Go where he will, it is the same one fixed star before his soul, toward which, like the needle, it turns with unerring, immutable affection. I have wondered whether any woman has thought of what it is to be loved by an artist.

“ ‘The change came. I will not tell you how, or when, or where. Enough that I looked once into her speaking face, once into her deep, fathomless eyes, and finding there the cold, calm gaze of complete worldly womanhood, I went out from her presence forever. I will not rehearse the pain that followed. Why, man, I had worshipped nothing for years and years except that growing, glorious beauty. The astrologer who had named a star, and worshipped it night and morning for fourscore years, felt not half the sense of agony, when he saw it vanish out of heaven, that I then felt. And this was a separate feeling from wounded love. I kept all that by itself. The first great feeling was that I had lost my idol; and I wandered up and down the world, seeking another in vain. For years I was a roving artist, never approaching a city. At length I saw this glen, and I liked it. I bought this piece of ground for a trifle, and built the hut. I live quietly and calmly, selling a little fruit in summer for the purchase of what I need in winter.

“ ‘The old idolatry has not been roused for thirty years or more. I have not painted in twenty years. I find this life better. I am alone here. No one disturbs me. I never read. I seldom think. I live, that is all.

“ ‘ Sometimes I have dreamed—not of late years, though—and she has come back to me in all the ravishing beauty of her girlhood. Those dreams were more blessed than the reality, for in them she loved me. But, in truth, she never did. I have lived for thirty years, and, since that parting, when she was radiant in cold, calm splendor, as the moon in winter, and I crushed down to earth, I have not felt the clasp of her hand, looked into her face, nor heard of her existence or her fate till this day!’ ”

“ So that was she.”

“ ‘ Yes, that was she. It was like a flash from heaven, that meeting her. I was so calm this morning—I walked so happily down the valley. I had no thought of this, and when I raised my eyes, and saw, and knew her, I thought at first that I would throw my arms around her, and call her mine! But the old look was there unchanged—the same cold gaze of passionless worldliness, and it chilled me as of old. It was hard to leave her then, and how hard now! But the end is approaching rapidly. Do you see this? (He pointed to his white complexion and the red cheek half covered by his beard.) The village doctor tells me it is consumption, and I am soon to be part and parcel of the ground I am treading on. I did not wish this. I rather shrink from it now. But I have been looking about for a quiet place to lie, when I go to the rest I needs must take, and I have found it. You have the story now.’ ”

“ I have given you, as nearly as possible, the words

of the hermit," continued B——, " and have only omitted the details of his parting with the object of his love. I half suspect that she was a coquette, but he most earnestly denied it, and did her all honor in his story. His paintings and sketches were scattered around in much confusion, but they were evidently the work of a master hand. I begged only this sketch, a pencil drawing of Medea, which I think shows the features of the portrait he first exhibited. I have given you his story, and you have mine. Such romances along rail-roads are not of every-day occurrence."

XXXVII.

Cr u i t.

May, 18—.

“ ‘Out of the deep shade of the silent fir grove,
Trembling, I survey thee, mountain head of eternity,
Dazzling, blinding summit, from whose vast height
My dimly-perceiving spirit floats into the everlasting!’ ”

“ ‘MY dear Joseph, you are not in Chamouni.
These are not the Alps. Can’t you be a little more quiet, and let us have a cast across this basin in the hollow, without disturbing the trout?’ ”

“ ‘Who marks out there the path for the morning star?
Who wreathes with blossoms the skirt of eternal frost?
To whom, wild Arveiron, in terrible harmonies,
Rolls up the sound of thy tumult of billows?’ ”

“ ‘There, Joe, I told you so. This is not Arveiron, but the Hemlock Run.’ ”

“ ‘That is a poor pun, Philip. Don’t spoil a splendid quotation with such trash.’ ”

“ ‘I didn’t intend a pun, Joe, but, if you don’t get your feet out of my tackle, and attend to what we came for, I’ll cut your acquaintance till lunch, and go down stream on my own hook.’ ”

“ ‘A la trout—eh, Philip?’ ”

"Bah—that's more atrocious still. Stand back now; I've put on a well-dressed, gay blue fly, and I intend to prick the fellow that rose yonder under the alders; so give me a full swing for my right arm—so!"

It was a splendid morning, that one which woke my friend's eloquence. And well he might be eloquent. The mountain summit over against us was white, and stood up proudly in the sunlight; and here and there, out of the snow, a lofty hemlock, itself snow-crowned and clothed in white majesty, stretched its giant form toward the serene sky, as if desirous to vie with the mountain in dignity and glory. We had been in the forest until now, and suddenly coming out on the bank of the stream into such a splendid sunshine, and such a magnificent view, might well wake up poetry in a heart as susceptible as his. It would have made rocks eloquent. The brook did praise God, with clear voice and cheerful. The wind in the trees praised Him. The delicate anemone, peeping out from the dead leaves of last autumn, praised Him. The sky praised Him. The clouds, winging swift flights over the forest, praised Him. By my faith, all things were eloquent with praises that glorious morning!

But you are asking, How came we there? Know you not that in these days the trout streams run but a step from Wall Street, and the great salmon trout lie in pools not far from Broadway? You have but to step over to the foot of Duane Street, open your fly book and arrange your tackle, dress up half a dozen flies, and see the running-gear of your reel all correct, and, pres-

to! you are in the prettiest nook of a country spot your eyes ever beheld, and the sun is not so far down in the west but that you may hope to take a dozen good trout before he quite leaves you.

Trout streams abound along the Erie rail-road. After passing Cohecton, there is not a station at which you may not safely leave the train, with full assurance of being in the neighborhood of good fishing. It is not my purpose to tell you the precise locality of our present history, simply because Willis has forbidden the disclosure. He discovered this brook some time last year, and purposes keeping its use for himself and his friends a while, at least. We came out in the express train, passed the afternoon and evening in resting and preparing, and were away at sunrise for the water.

While Joe was reciting, I was preparing, and when he had concluded, I had thrown twice across the bottom of the ripple without raising any thing. But the third cast was a lucky one, and I hooked a splendid fish. His gold and crimson sides gleamed as he took the fly, and then again as he sprang out of the water, when he felt the first prick of the steel. My old hazel rod has done good service for many years, and I had it with me now. The fly tip was a new one, selected, as I supposed, with great judgment; but I never was more deceived by appearances. At the first strain which I gave it, I saw it yield at one point and bend nearly to a right angle. This was unfortunate, and I made up my mind that I must lose the fish or break the tip. Of course, I resolved on the latter; and with a vigorous

effort I turned the trout, broke the tip, reeled him up nearly to the end of the broken rod, and landed him, with his weight of full three pounds on the ring at the end of the third joint. As the first trout of the season, of course we did him honor, and after watching him die quietly and peacefully on a grassy knoll, we wrapped him very carefully in damp leaves, and laid him in the basket, to be served up with special care when we should return to our quarters. My old tip, of last and many former years' service, soon replaced the broken one, and we now proceeded to whip the stream cautiously downward.

Trout fishing is the same thing year after year ; and I have so many times described its incidents, that you will hardly thank me now for a new story in old words. The forenoon wore on, and by the time the sun was overhead, we had as many as we could well carry to the horses, which were now something like a mile distant, where we had directed Sam to wait for us.

Staggering, sauntering, lounging along through the forest road, Joe looked the impersonation of your ideas of a fisherman. There was not a dry rag on him, nor, for that matter, was there a clean one, for he had plunged through a swamp of black mud that exceeded in depth all his calculations. But he was cheerful withal, and his voice rang through the woods in good old songs, that made them sound again. Those still, calm, quiet forests were full of spots where we could have lain down and rested ourselves for weeks without wearying, if we could but have had the sunshine forever with us through the

trees. There were little knolls where the dead leaves were dry and warm, and the thick clusters of gleaming blue liverwort were mingled with white anemone and whiter blood-root, and where one might lie and see far off the snowy mountains, and hear far off the dashing brook, and so dream the days away. It is a glorious life, the forest life; and when it tempts me with memories of old days, and weeks, and years passed in the dim woods with forest friends, the temptation is very strong. But times are changed. I can remember when I wrote to you, describing a day's trout fishing, when my light was a pine knot, and my folio lay on the floor of the cabin, which boasted no table, and when, through the open door, I could see a tall hemlock pointing with silent grandeur up to a starry, cloudless sky; and now I write this letter with my folio on a marble table; my light is gas; my seat, my room—all is different from the cabin; and, in place of the hemlock, I see before me, on an old canvas, a monk, who has pointed the same finger steadily up to heaven for some hundred years, and who seems likely to point thither when the old hemlock shall be dust.

Where was I? Ah! I left Joe Willis sauntering toward the wagon, singing along the wood road. He had gone on thus perhaps half a mile, when I saw him pause and stoop down to the ground; and when I overtook him, I found him studying the physical developments of a snail already out in the world.

"I say, Philip," said he at length, looking at me as I had thrown myself on the ground near him to await his

returning consciousness, "I say, Philip, I could wish I were a snail."

"To be trodden upon, oh my friend?"

"Yes, even so; to be trodden upon, so I did not feel the bitterness of resentment. Do you know, now, I believe the perfection of humility is the perfection of happiness? How little I should know of that which now oppresses me, how little I should miss or regret that which now makes me happy! How calm it would be, how silent! How the forest would be a universe to me, and the wood road an ocean to cross once in a lifetime! I should not live for any hope, suffer for any disappointment, perish in any despair. I should not see ghosts in the night time, nor long all day for the night time to come that I might see the phantoms again. I should not lie awake all night in lonesome watching, nor wander about all day in idleness. I should live a little while, without having bound myself to any thing I loved more than my own shell, and then I should die, and there were an end of all."

I did not speak, for I could not; but I looked up into his face, into the eyes of my old friend, and as I looked at him, and he at me, I could see the deep wells filling up, up, up, and I was still silent, but I pointed away at the sky that was so blue and deep above the mountain peaks, and as I pointed steadily, firmly, he at first refused to look, but at length he yielded, and his gaze grew earnest, unspeakably earnest and longing, and I walked on and left him there. You would have smiled, perhaps—nay, would have laughed outright, had

you, in wandëring through the forest, caught sight of Willis, covered with mud, looking more like a scavenger than the man he was, standing motionless in the forest road, with eyes fixed on the fathomless abyss above. But you, who know him, would not have laughed when you recognized him, for you would have known what filled his eagle vision, what he saw beyond the blue, what ineffable beauty, and glory, and blessedness he was looking into on that calm spring morning in the old wood road.

In the evening we were sitting in the room of the country inn, whiling away the comfortable hours of after-dinner with pleasant talk. A capital dinner it was, too, that we had eaten. There was every luxury of the country, and we needed nothing from the city; and we had the trout, the first one, and a long succession of the same sort, and we ate, and ate, and, on my word, I believe we should have eaten till morning if we had not been stopped by the reflection that we should have no time for a cigar unless we took it in the evening. Such appetites does the forest give, and such dinners does the country afford to such appetites.

The sun was long gone, and the moon lay in the east when we came out from dinner to the piazza, and took the large chairs placed for us by Sam (the best of attendants that a country inn ever boasted). Willis lit his cigar, and elevated his feet to the angle of comfort. I followed his excellent example, and so the evening wore on while we were silent and thoughtful. It was nearly nine o'clock when our solitude was interrupted.

An old man came down the village road, and paused for a moment in front of the tavern, and stared at our boots, the soles of which were the only portions of us or of our dress visible to an outsider. Doubtless the boots were sufficient to prove that we were citizens; for, after due inspection of them, I heard him mutter something about strangers, and he sat himself down on the lowest step of the piazza, and smoked as steadily at his pipe as we at our cigars. It was a clay pipe of the simplest form, and as he smoked the clouds grew thick around his head, and almost concealed the straggling white hair which flowed down over his shoulders out from under a felt hat of the oldest kind. His back was toward me, and, as I endeavored to trace the outlines of his head and shoulders in the dim moonlight, the curling smoke seemed to create a sort of halo around him, and the picture was perfect when he took off his rude hat and let me see the contour of a noble head.

For a long time we continued silent, and the moon went up the sky, and the clouds drifted into silver glories, and out of them, one by one, as if in procession to a holy place; and the old man, and Willis, and I sat and gazed at moon, and sky, and clouds, and the night went on.

It was then ten o'clock—half past—and the landlord came out quietly for a last cigar, and, without speaking to any of us, took a seat near us, and added to the smoky cloud, and Sam came from the kitchen with a stump of tobacco between his teeth, at which he puffed vigorously, and, touching his cap as he passed the old man, sat

himself down at the other end of the step, and smoked in silence.

I had long ago begun to imagine a romance about that fine old head, and for half an hour had been repeating to myself the possible events that had whiten-ed it, when Tiny, the little daughter of the landlord, who should have been sleeping three hours ago, came shining out in the moonlight in her white night-dress, and, seeing the old man on the step, rushed down with a chirrup of delight, and threw her little arms around his neck. He, nothing angered by the rude assault of the little beauty, swung her gently into his lap, and I heard him whisper with a half sigh as he looked at her, "Ah, *petite*, she was like thee."

He spoke in French. My fancies were dissipated at once, for no one of them had painted him a Frenchman. But now I had other fancies, for who did the old man mean to say was like Tiny, and what sweet memory was floating around his old head, more holy than the moonlight?

At length the story was told; for the words he uttered broke the spell of silence, and the landlord addressed the old man.

"Like—who is she like?"

"She is so like my Mary, my blessed Mary, that has been dead for almost fifty years."

"Do you remember fifty years?" demanded Willis, with a voice that betokened surprise.

"Yes, wellnigh seventy," was the reply.

"Why, I can't recall twoscore years; and it's a heavy

load to bear, the memory of my shorter life ; how can you bear up with the load of memories of threescore and ten ?”

The old man rose slowly from his seat, and placed the child, already half asleep, in the arms of Sam, who stood ready to receive her, and then, turning a calm hazel eye toward Joe Willis, spoke in a tone in which pride and sorrow were strangely mingled : .

“ I was at the Pyramids, at Acre, at the bridge of Lodi, at Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Moscow, Waterloo.” We started to our feet, and were ready to do homage to the veteran of a hundred battles.

“ Why, friend, you are one of the nobles of France. They should build you a palace at Versailles. The nephew of his uncle should know you.”

The old man smiled for a moment, and then placed the old hat on his head and walked away. The next instant he turned back, and, addressing Willis in French, asked him if he were inclined to walk a little way. “ With my friend, here, and you ? Yes.” He made no objection to my company, and so we went a hundred steps down the road, and then turned into the wood a little way, until we came to an opening where the moonlight reached the ground through the grove, which had been somewhat thinned. A glance showed us that we were in the village burial-ground. The old man led us across the inclosure to a mound, unmarked save by the luxuriant masses of the low myrtle, whose blue flowers were already blooming profusely, though hardly to be distinguished in the light of the moon. Here

our guide paused, and, pointing at the grave, said simply, but significantly, "She is there."

"The mother of Marie?"

"Her mother, my Marie;" and he bowed his head silently.

And now I am aware that this simple incident of our visit to the country is likely to be prolonged to a tedious degree. I am indeed afraid that it is too stupid to afford you any interest.

But there was deep interest in it to me, and in his simple story of a life of wars and of love.

He told us of a sunny hill in Provence, and a valley where the happy villagers lived in the years long gone; and in his quiet way he named their names—names of persons I had never before heard of—no one had ever heard of them out of that valley home. But were they not men and women of the world, who had lived, and loved, and borne their parts in this great drama of life, and gone off the stage half a century ago? and was it not curious that the plain old peasant who died in the year '97 should be named in this late year in the American forest?

And then there was a story of love—the same old story that the world has heard so many thousand years, repeated so many myriad times since the day that the sons of God loved the daughters of men; and his eye kindled as he said she was young and beautiful then.

Then! When? It was a startling thought that she was young once and beautiful, but old, bent, feeble, withered, dead, dust now! Nay, that she was young

and beautiful again now ! that she was radiant now ! that she was star-eyed now ! that she was verily an angel now ! And so he seemed to think, as one by one these thoughts came out in the conversation, and he grew even eloquent with the thought of seeing her soon again.

He told us of his child, the first and the last, and it was curious to see the faith he placed in the rites of a Church that he long since left, when he named the infant, and rejoiced that she was in holy ground, in the village of his own birth.

And so the night was growing old, and we lingered with him, hearing him speak of his great achievements, of the rush of armies, of the overthrow of nations. "Why, man," said Willis, "you have been in at the death of a great many kingdoms and peoples !"

"I was a soldier of the empire !" The reply was eloquent in its simplicity, and we left him there ; and I do not know but the old man is there yet. It can not be long before he takes his place by his Marie, and then there will be a pleasant meeting where no wars shall disturb them.

Willis and I strolled back to the inn, thoughtful and silent, while the calm moonlight rested on the valley and the mountain, on the white cottages of the villagers, and the myrtle-covered grave of the beloved Marie.

That same moonlight fell on you in the city, and you were walking along the noisy street. It shone in at the window where the student was beginning his night of labor, and it peered through the close-drawn curtains

into the brilliant festival. That night I know there was a gay scene among some of those who will read this sketch, and the song and dance lent the swift hours their lightest wings.

There was a gathering of the young, the gay, the fashionable, a crowd of pleasure-seekers of all kinds, and the moonlight would have been kept out, as not companionable to such ; but it found its way through an open shutter and the delicate tracery of a curtain, and it caught the eye of one of the loveliest there, and she paused, and a spell of holy influences came with the glory, subduing and softening every thought, but the next instant she swept on in the mazy dance, and the moonlight fell unheeded, and was lost in the glare of the chandeliers.

And just then, in the up country, an old man stood with his head bare in the same moon's light, and looked first at a grave at his feet, and then up into the labyrinth of stars and star-dust, and the night passed slowly on over both scenes, and the moon looked as calmly, coldly, and serenely on both.

Could we but see all the world at one sweeping glance !

XXXVIII.

The Old Presentur.

September, 18—.

IT was at Jullien's concert. A strange scene that, in which to meet the friends of old days in the country. But it was thus :

After our summer rambles, of which I have written nothing, we all returned to the city, and then, evening after evening, we were at Jullien's. The magnificent room, the brilliant crowd, the ever-changing, never-tiresome scene—these alone would be enough to attract us ; for we love to look on gay assemblies, and at no concerts or assemblies in New York have there ever been more brilliant audiences than these.

It was the third night we had been there, and the crowd was more brilliant than ever. We were seated in the balcony, on the right as you enter, half way to the front of the stage. The orchestra was just passing through the battle scene in the American Quadrille, and the enthusiasm of the audience was at its highest point. I held an opera-glass to my eyes, and was moving it about, enjoying keenly the appearances of the successive faces that entered my field of vision. Did you ever try it ? If not, let me recommend the plan, and you will find it well worth the trouble. Take a

distant part of the crowd, and let the glass bring groups of three or four faces at a time before you, and watch the expressions that indicate their varied emotions.

More than a hundred different faces had attracted my notice, when suddenly I found one that arrested my gaze. It was there but an instant. The face was that of a lady in the perfection of young but matured beauty. Eyes that, even at that distance and in that light, were darkly blue, lips that seemed to speak words of true womanly affection, even without moving, audible even across that vast hall to the ears of those that knew those features, a sunny brow, and a serene smile—all these made up the countenance that I caught sight of, and, as I said, only for an instant, and the next came the *encore*, and Hail Columbia, and the crowd arose, and the face vanished from my field of vision, and I sought it in vain again.

I was sure that I knew that face, and the next evening (I confess it) I paid less attention to the music than to the search after that countenance. It was apparently a useless search; and, indeed, it was hardly to be supposed that every one came, night after night, as did we. Late in the evening, we, that is, — and I, strolled out on the outer balcony overlooking the bay, and listened here to the mellowed notes, which needed no mellowing, but which seemed fit company for the water and the stars, that lent additional attraction to the eye and the heart. It was dark. The first rays of the late moon were falling on white sails out on the bay, but the dark forest on the Battery still kept Cas-

the Garden in a gloom. A ray of light, streaming from a gas-burner within the walls, fell on my face as a group of persons, walking along, passed near us, and one of them suddenly paused and advanced to me with outstretched hands.

"I knew I could not be mistaken. Three nights in succession I have seen you here, but was not sure of you till this moment."

I have said it was a strange scene in which to meet the friends of olden times in the country. I dare not write how many years have passed since I last saw that face. Few or many, they have been marked with sufficient incidents of joy and of sorrow to make a gulf of seeming impassable width to lie between me and those days; and yet its width is only seeming, and our joined hands made a bridge over which we passed to that dear old time.

It was in that pleasant home, whereof I have often before written, that we lived, and knew each other. She was one of the friends of early days, and I was so forcibly impressed with the contrast of scenes, now and then, here and there, that I forthwith resolved, with her permission, to relate the story, as illustrative of the contrasts which city life often afford us.

Among the old men of that country place, of whom Simon Gray, and John Maclean, and others, have been named heretofore, David Anderson was, perhaps, the most beloved by all the country around. He had come into the neighborhood thirty years or more before the time of which I speak, and opened a singing-school. A

visit which was, perhaps, not intended for longer than a month or so, gradually extended to months, and, after a year or two, he had become fairly domesticated in the congregation, as teacher of vocal music, precentor in the church, and afterward leader of the choir. He had a very small property, which he transferred to his new home, and with which he bought a few acres of land, that served him for a home and a farm.

David was a good, warm-hearted man, and at length won the heart of the daughter of a farmer of some wealth, and no one was surprised when they were married, but every one said that Lucy Smith was just the wife for him : they were both so quiet, so gentle, so perfectly calm, and both loved music so much. Years glided along in the old country fashion, and Lucy's father died, and David and his wife succeeded to his possessions. But David still taught the village singing-school, still led the congregation in their Sabbath songs, and loved more and more to hear and talk about the great masters of music. Indeed, almost his whole life was devoted to this one thought, and he read, and read, and talked, and talked of nothing else.

His children were early taught what their father knew, and were good singers at very early years ; and many a long evening in the old house was passed with stories of the great musicians, whose works the old man longed with unutterable desire to hear before he died.

He would sit with Lucy on one knee and Mary on the other, while his boys lay at his feet on the floor, and tell them of the sublime passages in the great

works of the masters, until their little hearts grew full of it, and they would sleep and dream of hearing them, though they heard nothing but the wind wailing around the old house.

It was a pleasant old house, built of stone, with huge oak rafters hewn out of the forest to support its unplastered roof. The first floor had four large rooms, with a kitchen larger than any of them in the rear. The second story was one large, garret-like chamber, extending over the whole house, with steps going down into a smaller garret over the kitchen, where the dried fruits and seeds were kept hanging. The northeast room, with its broad hearth, was the sitting-room, out of which opened the bed-room of the old man. On the other side of the hall, the front room was the parlor, and the other belonged to Lucy and Mary, the boys sleeping in the garret. I am thus minute in this description, because I design nothing in this letter except to show the contrasts of country and city life. But I must hasten to the single point of contrast that so impressed me.

It was a winter night, cold, starless, and stormy, and the wind whirled around the old house as if seeking some prey within its heavy walls; and the spirit of David Anderson was struggling to be free. A long life was nearly over, a long story wellnigh told; and around him were gathered his children, and some few of his friends and their friends, who had come to support him and them in the hour of separation. There was the venerable pastor, and Doctor Wilson, and old Abram,

the unfailing helper in sickness and trouble ; and there was Solomon Pierson, and his wife, and his daughter, and one or two others, and the family of David, and, last of all, myself, who, being accidentally at Doctor Wilson's when he was sent for in haste, had come with him to bid farewell to a man who had always commanded my respect and love.

He was traveling a dark and weary road. Sickness had broken down the stout man, and the approach of death had brought around him visions of other and sunnier days, that seemed to fade as they came near to him. It was painful to watch the delirious agony with which he reached out his thin and wasted arms to embrace some gliding phantom, or stretched forward to catch the tones of some beloved voice, that mocked him with silence when he most longed to hear. But this did not long continue, and at length a change came over his countenance ; and, after an interval of deep silence, he spoke in a low, deep voice, feeble, but full of sweetness to their ears, who shall soon hear it no more forever. I can not recall now his words, but they were calm and thoughtful phrases, full of affection and of faithful warning to his beloved family. Lucy, the eldest girl, was weeping sadly ; but his calmness arrested her attention, and she ceased to sob. Then there were some passages from holy writ. Then he spoke of the music of heaven, and said, "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there !" and I heard him murmuring a verse from the old hymn "Jerusalem :"

“There David stands, with harp in hand,
As master of the choir;
A thousand times that man were bless'd,
That might his music hear!
There Mary sings ‘Magnificat,’
With tunes surpassing sweet;
And all the virgins bear their part,
Singing about her feet.”

And then the old man made as if he would rise up; and they lifted him, and he smiled, and raised his right hand and his fore finger, thin, white, and shining as the baton of Jullien, and beating time, feebly but correctly, he broke out into that song of triumph:

“Those blessed ones, how bright they shine!
Whence all their bright array?
How came they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day?”

Clear, soft, and rich as in his youth, the voice of the old singer went through the first verse to its close. But in the next it grew lower and feebler, and still the lips moved, and still the song was heard, but now more distant, and now fainter and far off; and, even after Lucy's arms were thrown around the neck of her dead father, we fancied we heard him—who dare say we did not hear him?—joining the far-off songs, that no human voice may ever join till death has taken off the seal of clay that now prevents it.

There was another scene I intended to describe. It was the funeral of David Anderson, and the plaintive music of the village choir when he was brought for the

last time into the old church. But I am trespassing already too much.

The next time that I saw Lucy Anderson was in the crowd at Jullien's, after long years had changed us both. She is married, in a distant city—is wealthy, and, I doubt not, happy. “If my dear old father could but have heard this!” said she, as the sublime strains of the “Stabat Mater” came out to us on the balcony.

Go to Metropolitan Hall; select a seat where your glass can sweep the entire assembly; then look, if you can divert your attention from the orchestra long enough, for a Roman face, a soft complexion, two dark blue eyes, moved now to delight by the stirring strains of the quadrille, now almost to tears by the melodies of Beethoven, and (if you happen to select the right face) you will have seen the daughter of David Anderson, erewhile precentor of the church and teacher of music in the up-country—now, I doubt not, a leader in song that surpasses our most ravishing dreams of melody.

XXXIX.

III.

New York, October, 18—.

GOTTSCALK'S concert on Thursday evening was brilliant beyond what is usual in the city.

It was a clear, cold evening, and I left the room early to join some friends at Jullien's. I walked down the middle aisle, passing groups of brilliant ladies, splendidly dressed, and gleaming with all the elegance of our fair citizens, unsurpassed in the world for beauty and style, and so out into the cold air on Broadway. I had not taken ten steps on the pavement when a stranger accosted me, and I paused to look at him.

He was a tall, thin, gaunt man, of forty-five or fifty, with a pale face, and eyes that haunt me yet, so mild, and blue, and melancholy were they. His clothes were good, though illy fitted to his form. But that was more the fault of the form than of the tailor, for I doubt whether any one could be found to fit exactly the various contortions into which nature had twisted that lank body, or the worse ones into which he was constantly throwing it. But his appearance was that of a man of comfortable means, and yet he was shivering with the cold air, and his knees trembled fearfully; and those melancholy eyes of his so fascinated me, that

I felt like taking off my cloak and throwing it about him ; and I verily believe I should have done so had I met him elsewhere than in Broadway, or had I not suddenly thought of the incongruous effect my short cloak would produce on his long body.

“ Can you show me the way to a good hotel ? ” The question was curious enough, in sight of the St. Nicholas and Prescott, and at the very door of the Metropolitan. I pointed into the office of the latter without speaking.

“ Ah ! that’s too brilliant for me,” said he ; “ I want something more home-like than that.”

It was a thought for Broadway, that, wasn’t it ? A man couldn’t go into the Metropolitan, for it was not home-like. It somewhat touched me. The tone of voice had something to do with it, but the eyes had more. They did not change their expression at all as he looked at me. I wondered what would be home-like to him, and what sort of a home his was. Had he been brought up in New York, accustomed to its bustle and brilliant scenes, he would not have made that objection ; so he must be from the country. Home is a word that expresses a varied meaning to various persons. To some, a gay and changing round of pleasure ; to some, a calm, still, undisturbed resting-place ; to one, a lonesome, desolate spot ; and to another, a blazing hearth and a round of loving hearts. To me, in that crowded, roaring, rattling street, the word brought back a clear vision of the old house under the trees, the waving branches, through which the moonlight fell in silver

showers, the old half-door, across which I used to lean when my head was only high enough to reach up to it, and I had to stand on a stool to climb out over that forbidden passage ; and, along with that, a vision, too, of the broad chimney, the pile of logs flashing, and sparkling, and blazing upward, the roasting chestnuts, and the free-hearted group that burned their fingers with them, while the more sedate sat quietly, and read, or talked, and listened to the wind roaring outside among the trees. It would take a volume to write all the thoughts that flashed through my mind at that one word, and yet it was but an instant that I paused, and, looking at the man, asked him, "What do you call home-like?"

"Something quiet—some still place where I can get a little sleep ; for I am weary, very weary, and I must sleep, or I shall die." There was something strangely musical in his voice, but I could not mistake any longer. He was not a sane man. He could hardly be called crazed, but his mind was manifestly disordered. I never pass by such a person. I have a veneration, equal to that of the North American Indians, for a disordered intellect, and I could no more let such a man wander up and down the streets than I could my own flesh and blood. But I was going to Jullien's. My engagement was peremptory. He must go with me before I could find him a home. Music never harms such persons. So I bade him go with me, and in a few moments we were walking up Broadway together.

"Which way are you going?" he asked.

"I am going to Jullien's concert first, and after that I will find you a resting-place."

"Jullien's! Jullien's! I was there once. It was in Europe, wasn't it? yes, in France—no, in England!"

"You have been in France and England?"

"Oh, yes, I have been a great wanderer, looking for some place I could rest in."

"And have not found any?"

"No, not any. There is nothing that is like home."

He did not seem to know how near he was to quoting the ballad that every one knows and loves.

"And what was your home?"

It was a dangerous question, for it might excite him; but no, he was used to it; and he gave me the old story, that, I doubt not, he has given a thousand times.

"It was a great place, my home. It was in a fine old forest, with a running brook, a shining lake, a noble house."

"Why, there are a thousand such places as that in the world."

"Ay, but there are none of them like home."

The argument was irresistible, and I walked on in silence. We entered Metropolitan Hall together. He accompanied me willingly, but would by no means consent to my paying for his admission. On the contrary, he produced a well-filled wallet, and, with an air that showed clearly that in money matters he was abundantly able to take care of himself, he bought his ticket and went in with me.

We were just in time for the Katydid Polka and its

exquisite measures. Have you heard it? If not, you can not so well appreciate the effect it produced on my companion. The sounds of the evening wind, the pleasant walk under the shadows of the trees, with the trembling moonbeams falling through them, the chirrup of the katydid and crickets, all so inspired the poor man with memories of old times, that he covered up his face with his hands, and I believe he wept; the strains which to others were so enlivening and joyous, proving to him the very reverse. It was not till the close of the concert that I thought of asking him if he had any friends in New York. "No," said he, but in such a tone that I doubted him. It rather jarred, too, on my ideas of the man, to have him tell me a falsehood, but I pardoned him that, and, having seen the ladies safe in the carriage, with Joe Willis to take care of them, I walked down Broadway with the stranger. I had made up my mind to take him to the Prescott House.

As I reached the entrance to the hotel, a gentleman hastily advanced from the office, and, seizing my companion by the arm, expressed delight at his return.

"You are acquainted with him?" said I.

"He is my father, sir. Where did you meet him?"

"We have been at Jullien's together. I am glad to leave him in safe hands. Good-night, sir," said I, and I took the father's hand. He looked with those same haunting eyes of his into my face, and said, "Ah! you are going to leave me. It is always so. I am very sorry you can't help me. I am much obliged to you;

but I thought you would take me to some place like home."

I drew my cloak close around me, for it was cold, as I walked along the pavement, with the moon shining down on the brick walls and the ringing stone, and I was absorbed in thought. I ran against a heavy gentleman, who cursed me unmercifully; by the sound, I thought I hurt him, and I begged his pardon; but it did not mitigate his severity. I separated a gentleman from a lady whose white-gloved fingers lay delicately on his sleeve, by unpardonably blundering directly between them, instead of taking the right or the left. I begged their pardon also, but it didn't seem to appease the offended gentleman a particle, who looked thunder-clouds at me, though the lady stood laughing as if she would fall. It was worth being laughed at, to see such sparkling eyes. I stumbled over some timber, and pitched myself against a small boy with such force as to send him flying across a temporary side-walk constructed over an excavated lot, and he would have vanished into the unknown depths of the excavation but for a fortunate catch that he made at the round timber guard. How the boy howled! but some silver silenced the howling, and inured to the benefit of the pea-nut woman at the next corner, whither the boy steered a straight course, while I pursued my way through less frequented streets. I was thinking thus:

There are many wanderers like that man on the face of the earth—nay, in fact, we are all very like him, and the few that are not like him are the exceptions. We

do well to pity one another, for we are homeless. It is not alone the memory of that dear place in the country, ever blessed in the memories of boyhood, and ever more beautiful, more calm, in the long retrospect through years of storm; it is not alone that the sea over which we look back to the childhood from which we set sail is a tossing, tempestuous sea, or that its waves are green and very like graves—every one of those hillocks of water the graves of those who have heretofore been with us; it is not alone that the sounds of those old tunes have a winning sweetness, coming out of the far past, such as no sounds, no voices now have—it is not any nor all of these things that make men restless, longing, and sad, but it is that the prospect is no better for the future, when they sit down to look on it deliberately, and, after all their toiling and battling for rest and repose, they are left to my strange friend's last words to me, "I am very sorry: I thought you would take me to some place like home."

Oh! friends, if you meet that man in his wanderings, speak kindly to him. If you meet any man, sane or insane, who in this weary world seeketh rest somewhere and the repose of home, for the sake of all your dear old memories, of all your childhood's blessed dreams, your young glad plays, your dreams of rest—for the sake of your hopes of home when wandering is over, speak to him kindly, lest you add one sadness to a cup of sorrow wellnigh overflowing.

And one thing more. After spending your dollar and your evening at a concert, if on the crowded pave-

ment you meet a poor man asking food or rest, do not pass him by with haughty silence, as too many do, but ask him what he wants: if food, give it to him—you can buy it any where; if money, be wary of him, but do not give him over to the police too hastily; if he asks the way to a hotel, ten to one he is my friend: take him to the Prescott House.

XL.

Egypt in New York.

November, 18—.

“**D**O you believe that those are the bricks?”
We were walking up Broadway, and, when near the Stuyvesant Institute, met a gentleman and lady, the latter speaking in a voice full of wonderment, which attracted our attention. “My word for it, they have been in the Egyptian Rooms, looking at the Israelitish manufactures,” said Willis. “Curious, is it not, to hear people in the streets of New York discussing the qualities of Pharaoh’s bricks? Let us turn into the Old World.”

So we entered the Museum, and it is, as you know, like passing from the present to the far past. Instead of meeting the crowd that you would naturally expect to see thronging the rooms in which the men of four thousand years ago stand revived, we found a couple of ladies, and only half a dozen students, gazing with wearied eyes into the faces of the mummies, and, with earnest countenances, beseeching some reply from the silent people. How profound the silence of an Egyptian mummy! It is as if a seal had been set on the silence of death itself, forbidding even the suggestive look, the speaking repose, the teaching calmness.



It comes over one like a flash of lightning, at length, that this statue was once a man ; that it once lived, and loved, and suffered, and thought, and talked, and went hither and thither, and at last died. At first you are appalled at the idea ; then it becomes a startling truth, and you wonder what the thin lips would say if the seal were now taken from them ; and then come thronging fancies of the long-gone years, the streets of forgotten cities, the chambers of forgotten houses. Why, that man knelt at Karnak, fought with Shishak, died in old Memphis. Nay, for all these are commonplace thoughts, that man had affections like ours, and in the silent peacefulness of his home, three thousand years ago, he sat beside his wife, and that arm was around her, and that lip pressed to her ruddy, sunny cheek, and it whispered low words of passionate fondness in the rare old tones of a long-forgotten but noble language.

" Philip," said Willis, and I sprang back so startled as nearly to overthrow an Egyptian girl that stood in her glass case, so wholly had I been absorbed in the ideas that always take possession of me in those rooms.

" Doctor," said a lady at the same moment to Dr. Abbott, who had been standing near me, and, by-the-way, the lady was pretty and bright-eyed, for all her curious question, " doctor, do you find them in glass cases like these ?"

" Ahem !" said Willis ; " that reminds me of Abou Simbel."

And while the doctor, with his usual politeness, was

explaining to his visitor that the glass case was a modern invention, Willis strolled with me toward the case in which is the splendid collection of signet rings, necklaces, and ornaments; and, leaning against the edge of the case, he proceeded to talk of his travels. I like to catch him in such a mood, for it is not often that he is willing to relate incidents of the days when he went off to wander alone through old countries.

"It was the fortieth day after I left Cairo. I had taken great care to have a good new boat and a good old crew. The latter were ten of the finest-looking and laziest Arabs that I had seen in Egypt, and it took all of my dragoman's time to keep them awake and attending to the boat.

"We were approaching *Philae*, and I was seated on top of the cabin, watching the growing magnificence of the ruins of the great frontier city of Upper Egypt, when the men approached and begged a feast in honor of our arrival within sight of Abou Simbel; so I gave them wherewithal to feast, and they devoured rice and mutton enough in half an hour to have fed forty. The consequence might be imagined. I was absorbed in my gazing, for I had willingly allowed them to make the boat fast within seeing distance of the great temple and the colossal statues of Rameses II., and I had forgotten to eat or drink, lying under the awning which I had rigged for my own accommodation, and looking on the relics of the old glories that have never been equaled in later years, not even on the White Acropolis. While I mused the men got the boat away again, and evening



came down with the silence and solemnity of evening among Egyptian ruins. After a time the boat slowly forged across the river, and I raised my eyes higher and higher as the soft and beautiful features of the Colossi rose higher and higher before me, till at length I stood up, and almost worshipped with the idolatry of the old Egyptians. I was thinking of the sublimity of those creeds that led men to erect such temples—of the devotion to their religion which extorted such expense, such skill, such labor, to do honor to their gods—and a vision of the old splendor of their sacrificial ceremonies was coming over me. The moon was in the sky, and the sunlight was quite gone. A calm, soft, twilight-like night had succeeded the warm and sultry day, and as the last faint evening breeze carried us under the ruins of Philae, I had lost all thought of the time or the age, and was an Egyptian of three thousand years ago, going homeward over the sacred river to a palace in the southern city, when—

“‘Is it a mummy?’

“Those were the words I heard, and I found myself lying on the shore, wrapped to my neck in a blanket, my face alone visible to the mixed crowd that surrounded me. On gathering my scattered senses, and some information on the subject, I found that a flaw had struck the high latteen sail, and thrown the boat well over. She would have weathered it had any one been looking out; but every man of the crew was sound asleep; and as she went over, I had fallen, striking my head on a stone that lay on the lee deck, and

had no sensation whatever as I went into the water. We were close to the shore, and were picked out rapidly enough by a number of persons who had been watching our approach, and who proved to be the crews of two boats with English travelers on board. I had been instantly rolled in a blanket, and probably three minutes had not passed after the accident when I heard this question. I can hardly say I had been insensible, but I had been in a half helpless and confused condition. A lady of the party approached the group, and, looking down on the curious object she saw lying there, asked, 'Is it a mummy?'

"It was comical enough, and I opened my eyes on the prettiest face imaginable. You never saw two blue eyes open so wide as did hers when she saw the mummy look at her, and the moonlight sparkling in his wet orbs. Then I laughed, and she was scared wellnigh to death. 'Bless me, John—Joseph—here, quick! here's a live mummy!' said she, taking a sudden notion that I was getting up a joke, and mistaking me for one of her own party, but without an idea of my exceedingly wet and uncomfortable condition, and only desirous of carrying on the joke. I lay on the shore wrapped in a black blanket, my head under the shadow of a large rock, part, I believe, of the fallen head of one of the Colossi, when her friends approached at her call. I humored the joke too; for, in fact, I was not very cold, and the blanket wrapped outside of my wet clothing rather warmed me. When they came up, she made them stop a little way off, and listen while she should

question me about the days of the glory of Abou Simbel. The groups of Arabs, some thirty or more, stood around in the moonlight, forming a picturesque scene, but puzzled to understand it. The beautiful girl—for she was exceedingly pretty—commenced her catechism in an amusing tone of theatrical solemnity :

“‘I command thee to speak ! Thy name?’

“‘Joseph.’

“‘Whew!’ whistled one of the gentlemen ; ‘I thought he was buried at Shechem. Some mistake about that.’

“‘Where was thy birth-place?’

“‘By the North River.’

“‘That means the Jordan, I take it,’ said the same voice in the rear.

“‘Did you know Abou Simbel, in the days of its magnificence?’

“‘Never till this day.’

“‘How came you here?’

“‘The waters of the great river brought me.’

“‘Came up against the current,’ muttered the commentator.

“‘In whose reign did you live?’

“‘The younger Adams.’

“‘Whew!’ again whistled the voice, that began to sound very familiar to me. ‘I have heard of the old Adam, but who the deuse was the younger Adam?’

“‘And of any other king?’

“‘Yes, many others.’

“‘For instance?’

“‘Andrew Jackson,’ said I, in a voice that certainly made the old hero’s name sound sufficiently Egyptian to be of the times of Pharaoh Necho or Shishak.

“‘Ask him his father’s name,’ said the gentleman. ‘Willis’ was too brief and distinct to be disguised, and I sprang to my feet as I said it, dropping the blanket and appearing in my own wet garments.

“‘Joe Willis, by all that’s lucky!’ exclaimed the observant man who had been making notes on my remarks, and who proved to be our old friend S——, who passed five years in America. He introduced me to the astonished lady, who had supposed me all the time to be one of their party, and we made a pleasant evening of it in the ruins of Philae.’

“I wonder where that mummied girl came from in the case yonder. She was daughter of a prince and priest. Let us ask Doctor Abbott where she was dug up.”

“Ask herself, Joe. The doctor has gone, and you must question the mummy.”

“She speaks: now listen, and I will interpret. She was born in the city of the Sun. She was the daughter of a princely house, of a royal line. She was beautiful, exceedingly beautiful, and the lips of nobles did her honor. But she gave no heed to their praise, though she might well have been proud of such homage, for the nobles of Egypt were the lords of the world. She was tall and slender. Look at her, as she stands there now, in the silent gracefulness of death, and you may judge of her sylph-like form, her light and dreamy walk, her gleaming footsteps. Her sunny brow had

never known a cloud, and her dark, radiant eyes shone with the light of pure and hopeful girlhood.

“The first change in her life occurred thus. At a feast in the royal palace, where, among all the beautiful, she shone most beautiful, she saw a stranger seated by the side of the first lord of Egypt. He was a young and graceful man, with a soft, dark eye, and a radiant look, that rested with unspeakable affection on the face of the noble by whom he was seated. Sometimes they spoke to each other, and then in low, earnest tones, but in a musical language that she did not understand, though its soft flow was like the river of the desert, and she knew that it was the language of Canaan. Anon an old man approached them, clad in simple but rich robes, over which his long white locks flowed in silvery splendor, and followed by a group of stalwart men, unlike the nobles of Egypt in dress or mien, but far more stately in appearance. Every one of them stood like a king, and the father of a kingly line. Their clothes were of strange fashion, and their language unknown. But it was whispered through the palace rooms that these were the strangers whom the king had invited to reside in his palace, the brothers of the foreign but universally-beloved vice-regent, and then she saw the young men descend from their throne, and bow their heads to the blessing of the patriarch, and the old man lifted his tall and stately form to its utmost height, and gazed with a monarch's look through the magnificent palace, and over the crowd of princes and nobles, of whom his son was chief, and turned and blessed him, laying his

white hand on his head, and passed on through the crowd, that fell back to the right and left before him, and disappeared from her view as she looked back at the face of the younger brother.

“He was one to love. His countenance had all the soft and matchless beauty of his mother’s face, and yet there was the pride of the chosen line of God in his walk and form. He was strangely like his noble brother, too, for they were both like their mother. She kept near them all the night, and when in her own palace, surrounded by her maidens, she was haunted by the same eyes.

“It were vain to tell of the growth of love in her young heart. Women, four thousand years ago, were much the same as now, and human hearts have had all the same passions and emotions from the days of Cain and Abel to these. There were the same concealments, the same struggles, the same unwillingness to confess it to herself—the same doubts, hopes, and despairs that alternate in the breast of gentle womanhood now. She had frequent opportunity of seeing him at a distance, as he rode through the streets of the great city, by the side of his brother; and sometimes they met at feasts, and sometimes in the temples of the gods; and at length, when her cheek had grown pale, and her eye had lost its lustre, and her lip had ceased its musical laughter and songs, she was kneeling one day in the Temple of Hor, when, by a sudden thrill, she knew that he was approaching, and she saw a train sweeping up the long avenue, and Pharaoh, the chief priest, with his

mightiest princes, came to worship. But Joseph and Benjamin left the throng, and, as the train passed on, they knelt near her, with their faces toward the east, and she knew by their gestures, and their looks and tones, that they were worshipping the God of their fathers, with their longing eyes toward the promised land. When Benjamin turned his eyes from their far gaze toward the land of Abraham, he met the beautiful eyes of the Egyptian girl, whom he had seen in other places, and forthwith his heart went out to her.

“ So they loved each other, and before another month was over, Joseph had demanded her of the king, and she was given, and that form was pressed in the arms of Benjamin. You smile. Doubt it, if you dare ; disprove it, if you can. She was the sister of Joseph, the cousin of Asenath, the wife of Benjamin. She was the beloved child of Jacob, the darling of stalwart Judah, the pride of the sedate Reuben, the pet of Simeon, and Levi, and Zebulon, and Gad, a second dove-eyed Leah ! I can imagine their home in the lower country, where the land was luxuriant with palms and vines. I can imagine the sons of Jacob growing old, and thinking bitterly of death in Egypt, and burial there. But she did not grow old with them. She died in her young, glad beauty. She went out of the arms of Benjamin even when he was but just learning how dear she was. Old Jacob wept for her, and remembered Rachel. Joseph, with strong faith, held up the sinking heart of Benjamin ; and Judah, stern but noble, stood beside her, and spoke the promises in which she had now a part.

"It was as hard to die then as now. The world was just as beautiful, and love was just as strong. And when at length she passed away—away from the land of the Pyramids and the Sphinx into the presence of her new fathers—of Isaac and Abraham, she left a desolate home on the bank of the great river, and a wanderer that had no peace till he slept with the dead of Egypt, and was at rest with her in the arms of his fathers."

"I say, Philip, I have sometimes thought that that other mummy, in the corner yonder, was Judah or Reuben. It is hardly tall enough for Judah. Perhaps it is Benjamin. Who knows?"

"Perhaps it is so. But as to the woman, doesn't it strike you that Benjamin was married before he came into Egypt, and brought some sons down with him?"

"Well, what of that? What was to prevent his having as many wives as his father had?"

"Ah! yes. But—don't you think it rather—ah—spoils the romance of the thing, Joseph?"

"Chacun a son gout."

I have written what I have written. It was the conversation of two dreamers in the Egyptian Museum; but it was here in New York, in the nineteenth century, and we were surrounded by objects that are indisputably from three to four thousand years old, and certainly we might be pardoned for dreaming.



XLI.

A Reminiscence of Wall Street.

New York, November, 18—.

IT was a cool, clear evening as Willis and myself drove into the city from Long Island. We had been following the body of an old friend to its last resting-place in one of the great cemeteries.

We use common phrases without thinking of them. I said "to its last resting-place," because that is a synonymous word with grave in modern usage, not because any one believes that the cemeteries near New York are to remain undisturbed forever, or that their only inhabitants are to be the silent sleepers. Men talk already of avenues through Greenwood, and dare to hint the idea of waking up those over whom hardly yet the earth has been thrown, and driving them elsewhere to seek more safe and sure repose ; for the march of the age heeds nothing—not even the solemn immobility of death, but presses on over all the better feelings of nature, over affection, religion—even over the grave ! Something of this sort Joe Willis was saying as we turned down Montague Street in Brooklyn. It was moonlight ; in fact, the last rays of daylight were hardly gone, and at no hour does that splendid building, the church of the Holy Trinity, appear more beautiful.

We paused as we approached it, and admired the effect of the moonlight on the east, and the last rays of daylight on the west, contrasting forcibly with the deep shadows and recesses. It was as still as midnight, and the moonshine fell on the pavement, and on the walls of the marble and stone houses, so that, except for a few lights in distant windows, one might have thought it a deserted city, and our voices, when we spoke, rang, and might well have been heard a whole block away.

In this respect Brooklyn differs very much from New York. Somehow there is always a sound, a hum, or, rather, a low murmur hanging over New York, that never ceases, except for a little while before daybreak in the morning. It is the great mass of the uttered thoughts and feelings of half a million people sounding above them. It is the voice of the revel, the moan of the hospital, the cry of the drunken brawl, the sigh of the poor sewing-woman, the laughter of the child, the death-gasp of the old man, the whisper of the lover, the oath of the debauchee, and a thousand—nay, half a million other sounds of human emotion, that unite to make up this sound that you may hear forever going up over the great city.

In the calm moonlight we drove on down Montague Street to the Wall Street Ferry, and, while waiting for the boat, and while crossing the river, Willis related a story of the gentleman whom we had just buried, that was brought to mind by our approach to the street, and which is somewhat interesting as a reminiscence of the East River and Wall Street. Willis related it as a per-

sonal recollection of our friend, given to him some years ago. "He used to tell the story somewhat in this way," said Willis, throwing himself back in the carriage, and talking precisely as if he were the relator of his own experience.

"My earliest patron and friend was Mr. S——, who was the founder of my fortunes; and, as I grew older, he retired from business, leaving me to take his place in Wall Street, while he passed the remainder of his life quietly at his old place down the island. He depended on me for advice as much as I had formerly depended on him. I was in the Western Country, on a mad expedition after land, which I can't be too thankful proved a failure. A letter reached me at ——, saying that the old man, whose life had been sufficiently stormy, was at length in a way to find repose. But he desired to see me, and with no less anxiety than I to look once again on his kind face. To me, who have had few near relatives, the friends of my youth were inexpressibly dear, and I hastened homeward, as I would have done to the death-bed of a father. It was a cold, bitter night in December that I reached the city. It was midnight. The ferry-boats had all ceased their trips. The ice was running rapidly. I must cross, or wait till morning, and I could not think of that; so I hired a boatman with a heavy bribe, and the promise of more if we crossed successfully within an hour, and we left the shore. It was dark and cold. The tide was not as furious in the East River as now, for the piers were then fewer, and not extended into the chan-

nel ; but the northwest wind added a heavy sea to the danger of the night, and, taking all things together, the prospect was poor. But I had been in rough seas and running ice before, and, taking an oar, I pulled a stroke that evidently surprised my Whitehall friend, and added to his hopes of a successful voyage.

“It was one o'clock when we left the shore. At half past three we were under the lee of Governor's Island, coming up the Buttermilk Channel on the return of the flood. At four o'clock we were making the shore near the old distillery, when a cake of ice came in on the sea, and closed around our egg-shell of a boat, and it cracked and crushed precisely as you have crushed an almond in the nut-cracker. Unfortunately, there was no one to pick the valuable contents out of the broken shell ; and if we had not been remarkably quick, and the ice remarkably strong, I am not altogether certain that I should have been here to-day. On the contrary, I think I might have gone out to sea on the next ebb tide, under water instead of above it on a cake of ice, as now seemed probable. By this time I was cold, as you may imagine. Rowing was out of the question, and I had been forced to beat my hands until they were sore, in vain efforts to keep up some sort of warmth in my numb fingers. And now, on this cake of ice, I must keep still, motionless, or I should go through ; so I sat down, holding the oar, which had never left my grasp, and looked about for my boatman. He was missing. A shout brought back a reply. The ice had parted, and we had parted company, and we did not meet

again till some weeks afterward. We had no time or inclination to exchange parting salutations or good wishes. In truth, I had no good wishes for him. I reserved them all for myself. I was thinking of no one else, and his fate formed no part of my apprehensions. Let me tell you that freezing to death is a painful affair, after all. It has none of the delicious, sleepy quiet about it that some persons imagine. It is no lotus-eating death, passing away into dreamy listlessness, and then into profound slumber.

“It is worse than nightmare a thousand-fold. It is the struggle of a prisoner in an iron cell, a fierce, furious struggle, a mad struggle, a terrible struggle. I felt the grasp of death, cold, tightening, chilling, deadening, on wrist and ankle, on neck and waist, on brain and heart. I sat motionless, and fought as no man ever dreamed of battling except in just such a case; but of what avail is it to resist when the weight of a world is pressing you steadily down? It was just that feeling. I saw a star over me, and it seemed to come down to me, and to grow larger and larger, and the silver point became a ball, a globe, a sphere, a world, hiding every thing else; and all I could see was that one great gleam of starlight silvering my eyeballs over, and ten thousand sharp pains darted through every part of me, and I fancied I shrieked aloud, a lonesome cry that might startle the gulls in the harbor from their rest on the floating ice, and a momentary, flashing thought of the startled sea-bird rising on his wings was in my mind, and then a blackness of indescribable ago-

ny, ending in insensibility, took possession of me. I was frozen to death.

“My next sensations were the thrilling pains of recovery, sharp, shooting, piercing, stabbing, twisting—in fact, every sort of pain conceivable. I was surprised to find myself alive. This was my first intelligible thought, for I believe I had known that I was frozen; and having deliberately given up after a struggle, I was rather astonished at finding myself likely to thaw out, after all. But I had fallen into good hands. I had gone ashore below Red Hook, and been picked up by some scamps, who cleaned out my pockets, and took my coat and the chief part of my clothing, for I certainly did not seem to need any of it. But a better specimen of humanity followed them and took me to his house, where Dr. — found me and resuscitated me. His attention was unwearying, and I believe he saved my life a dozen times that day. The next I was away. In spite of his earnest remonstrances, I was on horseback at an early hour, and was down the island at the old residence of Mr. S—— by evening. But I was too late. My old friend had gone away when I reached there, away by that dark road which I had myself been traveling. But he was in advance of me, and I knew it not. And are we not all traveling that same road, close on each other's footsteps?

“It was dust that lay there! dust, and nothing more. It did not welcome me to the old place. It did not reach out the old familiar grasp. It did not speak to me, nor shout the ever-cheerful words of greeting. It

did not smile, nor look at me. So that was death! And on the table lay a note directed to me, and I opened it, and read his last words for me, and looked up from time to time as I read aloud, to see if the dust gave token of assent, but the dust was as silent as ever, and did not say yea or nay. The old doctor had written down, at his dictation, these last directions for me. He knew I would come and read them before they buried him. I read them, and I said aloud, 'I will do it all!' and again I looked toward the dust; but it lay in serene silence, nor assented nor disapproved, and so I perceived the beauty and the blessedness of that perfect trust and confidence, both for this world and the other, in which my old friend had died.

"He was to be taken to the great city and buried there; and I prepared all, and we went with him to Brooklyn. It was a long, slow procession. One by one the wagons dropped off, by side-roads or at crossings, or turned back on their return track, and the hearse and my carriage reached the ferry alone. It was again evening, but not so late as when I last approached the river. The ferry-boats were crossing, though the ice embarrassed them; and, instead of landing us at the usual place, we were obliged to leave the boat at one of the long piers at the foot of Wall Street. It was a cold, starry night, and as we went up the street, the tread of our horses' hoofs rang in the clear air. It was a strange hour to be in the street, and a strange duty to be transacting there; but I was glad that it was just so. I was glad to go with the dust through the

scenes where it had once been living. There was a terrible significance in the sound of the hearse wheels rattling through the lonesome street. I remembered one morning, when I had accompanied him in his carriage to his office, when he was in active business, when he was known and honored on 'Change, and I contrasted that hour with this. Then the crowded pavement, the swift rush of business, the anxious countenances of the passers, the quick and hasty greeting and parting, all indicated the keenness, with which men followed their different vocations, and the busy earnestness of each man's life. But a change was here. The street was deserted. The lonesome sidewalk rang to the footsteps of a solitary watchman, keeping guard over—what? I thought of the heaps of gold lying in vaults, useless masses, represented in the street during the daytime by flying bits of paper, the gold and silver itself lying motionless, while this soul of gold—credit—was doing its business for it. And I thought of the heap of dust in the coffin before me, and I compared its value with the treasure. But yesterday, and it was worth shining heaps. But yesterday, and a wave of that now nerveless hand was sufficient to transfer a million. Why so changed? I can take that hand in mine and guide it across the paper. I could mark with those fingers the same lines, the same figures, and why would not that suffice to-morrow in the street? Why would not that mark be as omnipotent as of old? I tell you, Willis, I never felt it so difficult to understand what made the difference between life and death as I

did that night, following the body of my old friend through Wall Street."

As Joe finished his friend's story, we were at the foot of the street, and drove off from the ferry-boat and up to Broadway.

XLII.

THE OLD MARR.

TO some men, the recollection of youth, the memories which bring to life dead and buried forms and thoughts, possess no beauty nor attractiveness. Such men ridicule such memories as sentiment, and perhaps it is well that such persons exist. If all prized the memorials of the past alike, possibly we might not have so keen a love for them, who, in our love, have to contend with opposition, ridicule, or scorn. To those, a volume made up of the incidents of daily life, the commonplace occurrences of travel and of home, the affections that shine here and there, the gleams of joy that break out of the clouds of life, and the clouds themselves that gather sometimes so darkly, a volume of this sort has no interest; but the blessedness and beauty of memory we know, who live among the affections. That man who, in the days of youth, when all was bright, all flourished fairly and pleasantly, laid down his hopes in some dark place, and has plodded on ever since with slow, measured, weary footsteps—that man who, in other days, had anticipations of wealth that were destroyed, hopes of fortune that failed, ambition for power that was dashed, love for some gentle humanity that perished—any or all of these,

must have led a life of bitter struggles, a life of hard labor, if he has succeeded in crushing out of his soul all love for the memory of his brighter days. Few such men do not sometimes, in still and idle moments, find themselves suddenly in the midst of the familiar scenes and employments of the past, and, though their years be counted now by scores, their hearts, for the moment, fail to count them even by tens. That man who remembers nothing pleasant of his youth is not to be envied. It was a merciful, a glorious part of God's purpose, in creating our race, to provide that we should all be children before we were men or even women.

Precious and very beautiful is the memory of Martha Long, erewhile daughter of Stephen Long, farmer in the up-country, and now an angel. She was born to a pleasant home, and its flowers and hills, among which her infant years were passed, left their impressions of beauty, firmness, and greatness on her soul. Even in childhood, standing on the porch of the old house, and looking out at the hills around the valley which formed the horizon of her world of thoughts and dreams, she would speak, in the simple utterance of childish lips, words and truths that were blessed to hear, and ever to be remembered.

Are such gentle children made of dust? Is the record true of them also? If of dust at all, one could have fancied that child formed of the brilliancy that angel knees had worn from the golden floors of Paradise in kneeling there to pray, so radiant, so beloved was she.

Childhood, with her, was a long dream of perfect joy.

No shade ever crossed her forehead, no tear ever sullied the brilliancy of her cheek, no thought of evil ever darkened the light, verily like the light of heaven, which poured in a flood from the depth of her dark blue eye. Gazing into that eye when she was but ten, you were lost in the unfathomable beauty, the deep ocean of thought and feeling, the world of spirits and spiritual things that filled and glorified it.

The river farm was one of the finest in the county, and the Long family had passed it down from father to son through so many generations that the children of the family might have been said to be born to its beauty, and to have an innate resemblance to it and love for it. Stephen, the father of Martha, was an old man when his only child was born. He had lived alone for more than forty years on the farm, and then married the daughter of a neighbor, a child to his years, but a faithful and earnest wife so long as it was the will of God that she should live with him. This one child of their union was the idol of their house; nor was she unknown in other houses; for in the country no one can claim or monopolize any beauty, but all the parish claims a share in it; and all the parish and all the country claimed a share in the love of Martha Long, and she was the praise of the country all around as she grew into more perfect beauty, and more mature and winning loveliness.

At church on a Sunday morning she with difficulty passed the church door, so eager were all to see her; and rude and rough as were those who occupied the

pew immediately adjoining her father's, I have seen them silent, and with closed books, while the morning psalm was sung, and all their eyes fixed intently on the child, whose infant voice, as if already learning the melody of another and a better choir, soared away above the others in an untutored strain of surpassing glory.

I have described her at ten. At seventeen her beauty had ripened into magnificence, and then it perished.

For years Willis and myself had not been at the Old House. On our last visit we had passed an afternoon on the river farm with Stephen Long, shooting quail over his corn and stubble fields, and in the evening had eaten at his table, and, like all others, I had been won by the exquisite beauty of his daughter, then fourteen.

It was a pleasant moonlight evening. I was sitting in my library, pondering, as I well remember, over a book which I had that day found in an auction-store—a folio of the year 1475, being none other than the Tracts of Bartholomew Cepolla on Rustic and Urban Servitudes; and while I was thus engaged, my mind half stupefied with the antiquity which surrounded and enveloped me, suddenly entered Joe Willis, with that stern, calm face that I knew well betokened some more than ordinary occurrence.

“Come with me, Philip!”

I obeyed unhesitatingly. When would I not obey him, especially if he spoke in that voice? It was in just that tone he summoned me to the large room the morning we buried the beloved one; it was in just

that tone he called me when the bearers were ready to carry out the old judge from his old hall ; it was in just that tone he called me when Lucy's youngest, her boy of six springs, was to be carried to lie under the violets.

I followed him, seizing only my hat as I passed through the entry, and we walked swiftly down the city street, heedless of the crowd of pedestrians, and crossed it, heedless of the crowd of carriages conveying home their loads of gayety from theatre and Opera, and, turning swiftly down a dark, narrow passage, paused before a house, which looked as if it might once have been the habitation of human beings, but was now hardly fit to shelter ghosts, who most haunt half-fallen tenements. It had been a two-story house, but the roof was broken in the centre, and fallen in so much that the second story appeared utterly uninhabitable by any one, and, as I looked up in the dim light of a street-lamp flickering in the wind, which was somewhat fresh and chilly, and saw the front of the building, I hesitated for a moment before following Joe into the dark passage-way, which he had entered as if he knew it.

"Come on, Philip !"

The voice was the same stern, deep voice, and I again obeyed.

We entered, and the floor sank under our steps before we reached a creaking, shaking stair-case, which Joe ascended, and on which I followed his footsteps by sound and not by sight. At the landing he paused, as

if groping about with his hand for a moment, and then stepped forward a few paces, and I followed him into a room, or what had once been a room, now half open to the stars, more than one of which shone down through the broken roof, that afforded no shelter to one half of the chamber. In the other corner, where no light, except that of Sirius, the bright star low down in the sky, penetrated, but which that faint weird light failed to illuminate, lay something, I could not tell what, but a sense of stillness, a thought of calm, an indescribable feeling of solemnity seemed to be telling me that what lay there once had life.

Willis was silent still, but, turning swiftly round the room, and finding no living occupant, seemed impatient, and at the instant a heavy tramp on the stair-case announced another visitor to this curious loft, in which I found myself star-gazing and half inclined to think my friend moon-struck.

"I beg pardon, sir, I only stepped across the way to get a little something to warm me. Cold night and cold work, sir."

"I told you not to leave the room. I shall know you too well to employ you hereafter. Here is money : get a light of some sort."

"I hope you'll never get a chance to employ me at such work again. I wouldn't stay another hour in the dark, in this room, for ten times what you'll give me. Get a light! Yes, sir, I will."

"Philip," said Willis, when the man was gone, "Philip, it is curious that so many friends of our young

days, so many of the people we loved, are gathering up yonder, and we remain."

"I see nothing curious about it, Joe. It is the order of the world."

"Philip, the week before she died (he spoke just so. What need had I to ask whom he spoke of?) they brought into her room a child of matchless beauty, and she held it's tiny hand in hers, and prattled to the child of all the beautiful fancies that filled her own soul; and at length, growing serious, she looked into the babe's face and talked of heaven. I remember the scene as if it were of this morning; and how, when they carried the child away, she pressed her arms around it, and kissed its cheeks and eyes, and said, in a low, fond tone, 'We shall never meet again on earth, for I go hence soon, but I pray God we may meet in His heaven some day.' Philip, are the prayers of dying saints heard with more certainty than others?"

"Certainly not, Joseph. But the prayers of that saint were heard and recorded, and some day you and I will read them in radiant characters."

"Then that last prayer was heard, and God is merciful. I loved that babe for the sake of our dead idol; and for years I watched her growth, and watched how well she was loved, and I believed the dying girl's love had sanctified the child for earth, so beautiful and gentle was she; and sometimes I have looked at her, and wondered if that prayer would be answered, and we all be sitting some day together in heaven. Philip, if God is merciful, if God heard that prayer, if He answers it,

somewhere to-night up yonder, beyond those stars, or mayhap in the gloom of this dark chamber, they two are together, while we stand here by the dead dust of that child."

"Martha Long!"

The policeman returned at the instant with a candle—a tallow dip, that he had lighted on the stair-case, and the dim light revealed the outline of a slender form lying on the floor, covered with a wet mass of clothing, out from which, with startling beauty and magnificence of contour, gleamed the dead face of the once radiant girl.

"Yea, there she is!" said Willis, bitterly; "there lies one more of the things that I have loved, lived for, cherished silently, secretly, in my heart of hearts, and she is dead now! I tell you, Philip Phillips, there was nothing on earth last night that I loved better than the thought of this child! I did not love her. I did not care to see her. I have not seen her for four years. I have only thought of her as the last living object that was the bearer of her blessings and her kisses save myself, and the child was to me almost like a legacy from her. Even Lucy, when she died, bade me take care of that child for dying Ellen's sake! And I did care for her; and a year ago, when I heard that she was to be married, I sent her a dower worthy her acceptance, for Ellen's sake; and I heard that she was married and in the city, and happy, and I was content; and this evening, as I crossed the ferry, they told me a crazy woman had drowned herself, and they were drag-

ging for the body; and while I inquired carelessly who she was, and where she lived, and learned that she was a poor sick girl, who had been betrayed by her husband, and abandoned in sickness and want on the eve of childbirth, and that she had thrown herself and her young child into the stream in a fit of madness, and even as I said 'Poor thing—poor thing!' and was passing on, they laid that body—that sanctified body—before me on the stones, and that holy face looked up into mine with the smile of the angel that first met her when she broke forth from the chains of her madness into the company of the stainless.

"I had her brought here, for no other home had she in this great city, and the inhabited houses around refused to receive her, and a policeman directed me here, and I left that hound yonder to guard her sleep, and gave him gold to buy his time.

" 'Now, Son of God! what dost thou now in heaven,
While one so beautiful lies earthening here?'

"Philip, gold would not buy one solitary watcher in this great city to stay one hour by that dead girl, and I know a hundred cottage homes—ay, and stately halls, that will keep weeping vigils to-morrow night for that same clay. He says her dead eyes stared at him in the starlight!—those star-like eyes, that will never weep again, but whose closed lids—close them gently, Philip—gently, lovingly—will win tears from hundreds by another sunset. Where are you going, Philip?"

"For help to take her home."

"Home—where? She is at home."

"To the old place."

"To our old place? It is a good thought."

"No, Joe, not to our place—to her father, to the river farm, to the old church-yard. Come with me, Joseph. This has strangely shocked you. You will be ill."

It had produced a startling effect on my friend, whose health has been sadly failing of late. But he would not let me do aught that he could do as well, and it was not till the ladies came that we could persuade him out of the room. They arranged to have the precious dust removed to our own house, and the next day, preceded by a messenger carrying the solemn tidings, we bore her sadly up to the old farm and the arms of her broken-hearted parents.

Long before we reached the house we met wagon-load after wagon-load of the people, and the carriages of the wealthier neighbors, until, when we arrived at the farm gate, there was a procession behind us half a mile in length.

The intelligence, which had preceded us but a few hours, was a terrible blow to the father and mother. Nor can those who do not know by experience how far the city is from the farm in the country well imagine the possibility of such an occurrence; but it was just so. The parents, who had intrusted her to a young man whose good name they had taken on credit, without much examination, and whose art had won her young love, did not know all that passed in that first

year of wedlock—how miserably she lived in low lodgings, with companions whose blasphemy and sins confounded her innocent soul—how poverty already grasped her—how she shrank from telling them her story—how she was, at last, abandoned in the hour of peril—how she wandered, insane, about the streets of the great city, until the happy release which she innocently sought.

The pastor waited for us at the gate of the old farm, and lifted his hat, and essayed to speak, but bowed his head and sobbed aloud; and Willis and myself, dismounting, walked to the shadow of the great tree, under which stood Stephen Long and his wife, a stricken couple, and, taking their hands silently—for we could not speak—delivered up to them the charge of their dead child, and again mounting our horses, turned their heads away from the gathering assembly, and by cross-roads and lanes, familiar of old, sought our way once more to the old house.

As we passed along, we felt that the years have changed us—these later years of toil, of weariness, and worldliness, and that the calm of youth and the quiet thoughtfulness of our early lives have given place to the bustling, busy life that all men lead who are in and of the world in these days. Willis has, for the most part, kept out of the world. He has wandered hither and thither, passing most of his time in a new place, on which he has devoted much labor and expense to make it a paradise. I have settled into professional life in this city, and escape from labor occasionally, but

briefly, to enjoy the renewal of old pleasures. It was a day for memory. The air was laden with odors that were like memories. Our horses, not acquainted with the old roads, looked cautiously around them, and now and then started at the familiarity of the birds, which are here never frightened by boy sportsmen. Ibrahim and Zephyr, our steeds of old, were dead, and before we reached the old house, we passed a clump of trees where they both were buried. It was a subject of long and serious discussion with us, when each died, whether horses had souls to go downward to the earth when they were dead, and whether there would ever be a resurrection for gallant steeds; nor did we discuss it idly, for the doctrine of transmigration of souls is oftentimes an interesting doctrine, and one which affords food for much thought.

We loitered slowly along the wood roads. Here was the spot where, in olden times, we used to sit and watch the spire of the church, seen far off through an opening in the forest. We paused to look, but the forest opening had closed. Here was the bank of the brook where we never failed to water the horses, and we offered the opportunity to our animals, but their city notions spurned the cool, dashing stream, and they refused to drink. And so we spurred on, and went down the shaded road at a long gallop, bringing up with a jerk at the old gate—the same old park gate, unchanged in brace or board since it swung to our departing steps in boyhood. It had opened to many since those years of our youth, and we looked solemnly at it now.

I remember it when the old judge was carried out for the last time. I remember it when Lucy's bridal party entered it. I remember gay troops of children welcomed there, and solemn processions of sad-eyed old people going out there. It was the entrance and the exit to our Eden. It was the bourne which, once passed, seemed to mark always the line between the calm and blessedness of boyhood and youth, and the anxieties, cares, and trials of the world. Returning and repassing it, we entered again the sacred inclosure of quiet childhood, the place of rest. That gate kept out all worldly troubles, but it would not keep out the angels of sorrow. Joe—Joe Willis, I can hear the swinging moan of the old gate now, as I heard it long ago, when we carried her out to rest down yonder by the village church.

He was thinking of the same thing as we paused before the gate, and he knew my thought, though I did not speak it aloud, and I could see the old smile, that serene and faithful smile, come over the face of my friend as he gazed wistfully up the avenue, and then away toward the church spire, and then up through the trees that overshadowed us.

A group of children, that did not recognize the master, stood hesitating whether to open the gate, when their mother hastened out with vociferous welcomes, and threw it back with the same old creak.

"Your gate-hinges need oil, Mrs. Smith."

"Faith, yes, sir, and they've needed it some time, I'm thinking. I don't think they've been oiled since the old judge's time, Mr. Willis."

We entered the park, and rode slowly through the winding wood road, startling the quail here and there, and sometimes rousing a partridge or a rabbit, and so we approached the hall door, and dismounted on the familiar greensward.

Within, the house was unchanged. Every chair, every article of furniture, every picture was where we left it; and when, at length, we were seated together in the library, and the windows were thrown open to the soft air, we could imagine the years gone back, and ourselves, as in other days, at home.

It was Saturday, and the afternoon passed quietly. We wandered around the house and grounds, sat on the bank of the river, whistled snatches of old airs, caught ourselves sighing occasionally, and, on the whole, made a melancholy sort of day of it.

But with the twilight came a change. The hour that usually brings sadness brought comparative cheerfulness to us, as the gloom seemed to steal in at the windows and overcome the light.

As the evening advanced we had visitors, and quite a company assembled in the rooms, but they did not remain till late, for it was the evening before the Sabbath, and long before midnight we were each in our own room, left to sleep and the pleasant company of dreams.

Next morning we rode together, as in old times, to church, passing, as then, the loaded wagons, with the good people of all the country around, going to the same place, and we paused now and then as we passed

those whom we recognized, to inquire after various members of their respective families, whose faces we missed. The sad cause of our visit was known to all, and all hearts were in mourning.

It is a sad record, that of a village or a country congregation for a score of years. The young people have grown sedate, and even old ; the old people are mostly gone to the assembly of the dead ; houses have changed inhabitants, farms have changed owners, pews in the church have changed occupants, and the voices of the village choir are new, and not musical, for want of the melody of old times.

There was the family of Simon Gray, once so stately in his seat, which, first of all, we missed ; and the inquiries we set on foot met sad responses, for the last few years had made this change, and we had not heard of it.

It was after the congregation had left the church, and when the good pastor stood with us in the graveyard, near the door, just by the grave of John Maclean, that we asked him what had become of Thomas Gray, the old elder's first and last-surviving son, and our informant pointed silently to a long grave, newly made, by the side of the old man and the wife of his youth. "He died terribly," said the pastor, with an emphasis which attracted our attention, and to our looks of interrogation he replied briefly,

"He drank himself into miserable poverty, and perished in a cold winter night on the road side—the same road side down which the old man had led him

by the hand a hundred times in boyhood to the school-house prayer-meeting. Some persons who had driven by in a sleigh remembered next morning that strange sounds had startled them as they passed the thicket on the lower end of Simon Gray's farm—groans and oaths intermingled; but in their merriment they did not heed it, and the son of the good old man died like a dog in the corner of his father's fields. He was nearly as old when he died as his father was at the time of his death."

I shuddered at the story, and remembered the old man, and wondered where he stood, on what hill of heaven, that bitter night, when the boy he so loved lay dying here in the snow. And Willis raised his eyes sadly to my face, and that glance reminded me of a day, years ago, when Ellen, the beloved, was a child, and came home with a frightened look, and said she was crossing the brook, and had paused to water her horse, when she was scared by Thomas Gray, who came by in his wagon, shouting and singing so that she fancied he was drunk, and she came home at a gallop, terribly frightened, for she had never before seen a drunken man. We doubted her judgment, for we could not believe it of the son of the good old elder. But it was even so.

How radiant was that memory! She stood on the greensward before the old house, just as she had sprung from her horse, holding the rein with her left hand, while she gesticulated violently with her right, and Leo stood by, calmly looking on, as if ready, were it necessary, to confirm every word of her story. And the vis-

ion departed, and left me standing there in the old church-yard, and Thomas Gray lay in the dust close by, and Ellen, the beloved, was—no, not there—not there. We did not think of her as there. Sometimes the thought of her closed eyes, her holy eyes close shut, the hushed lip, her lip sealed to silence by that last holy kiss, the white forehead, the forehead once gleaming with thought, gleaming in our memories with the last triumphant thought of God—all this in the grave, in the dust, in the church-yard, would for an instant overpower us ; but the next moment we heard a voice from heaven, and ceased to think of her as there.

“ Philip, let us walk home.” And so we walked across the fields, while Dick took the horses, and as we walked we came at length upon a quiet place in the old park, a sort of fairy ring, where the oak trees left an open circle, over which their branches met, and in which the grass grew short and close, intermingled with flowers, chiefly blue violets.

Willis, who had been silent hitherto, threw himself on the grass here, and I followed his example.

“ Do you remember that morning when I talked of dying, Philip ? ”

“ Perfectly.”

“ And do you know that I think more of it now than I did then ? ”

“ And why ? ”

“ Because this thing has shocked me more than I thought ; because I feel the approach of a mystery ; because I know that not far from me, it may be years off,

or it may be months, or only days, stands one with outstretched hand, ready to lead me through a dark passage into the revelations of the other world ; and I am almost ready. Not wishing any more to die than I did then, nor any less willing to live than I was then, I am ready, because I am satisfied that this disease with which I have fought for years is overcoming me, and, whether I will or not, I must die. I have not desired this. Since, years ago, in that hour of unutterable pain, the hand of God dashed from my lips the cup of bliss that I was brimming, I have been wishing to taste whatever cup was offered me, and I have drunk of very many, and some I have drained to the last drop ; but my thirst is the same thirst, the same unsatisfied longing. If it be time, I am ready to lift that cup of bliss to my lips again. I know very well that the thirst will but increase, until yonder, filled from the clear river, I take it again from her hands, blessed by the touch of her lips and the smile of her God.

“And now, Philip, once more promise me, what you promised when we left her there, that when this dust is dust, you will bury me—”

“Close by her, Joe—close by her, so that in the resurrection you shall not be separated.”

“So that I shall see her first in the morning, Philip.”

“And now homeward, Joseph. I can not let you dwell on these subjects.”

“Yes, homeward, Philip, homeward ! It is Home, is it not?—the dear old place ! Home of all joyful memories—of all joyful hopes ! I love that fancy of

yours, Philip, that in the resurrection we may return to our old homes. What a glorious old home this would be!"

I must consult physicians about Joe Willis. It can not be that he is dying thus, before my very eyes. I can not think of losing him. By my faith, if he dies, I will look out "a snug place to lie" for myself.

THE END.

RALPH EARL PR
WILLIAM COWPE

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